

DELEGATION

Name of person speaking:

Susie Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture and Community Services

Organization you are representing

City of Courtenay

Contact name

Susie Saunders

Subject matter

Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool

Specific request of the regional district, if any (i.e. letter of support, funding)

Requesting support for the City of Courtenay's funding request to the CVRD Recreation Commission grant function regarding the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool.

Requested meeting date

Tue, 02/13/2024

February 8, 2024

File No. 7710-05

Comox Valley Recreation Commission
770 Harmston
Courtenay, BC V9N 0G8

Sent via email only:
ldennis@comoxvalleyrd.ca

Dear Comox Valley Recreation Commission,

RE: Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool Funding Request

The City of Courtenay has submitted a funding request to the Comox Valley Recreation Commission Grant Service for financial support towards the capital maintenance, immediate repairs, and facility planning of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool in 2024. The funding requests are the result of City of Courtenay Council resolutions at the January 24, 2024 Council meeting:

THAT the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool What We Heard Report (Attachment 1) and the Comox Valley Aquatic Services Strategy (Attachment 2) be received for information to form the final Comox Valley Aquatic Services Strategy for Courtenay.

THAT based on the January 24, 2024 report “Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool - Condition Assessments and Options Analysis”, Council direct staff to proceed with procurement to start immediate repairs for the Courtenay Memorial Pool; and

THAT Council direct staff to proceed with procurement for an Options Analysis for the future of the pool at its current location.

The resolutions are a result of the feedback heard through the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool public engagement conducted in summer 2024 where over 1800 responses were received, as well as the completion of facility condition assessments conducted in the summer and fall of 2023 providing further direction to the City on the current state of the facility and required repairs for continued service delivery into the future.

City staff will be providing a presentation to the Recreation Commission as a delegation in support of this request and to answer any questions of the Commission. To support the discussion, the following information is being provided in advance:

1. Aquatics Need Strategy Update – Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool What We Heard Report and 75th Anniversary

- a. Report Attachment 1: Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool What We Heard Report
2. Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool – Condition Assessments and Options Analysis
 - a. Report Attachment: Presentation – Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool – Condition Assessments and Options Analysis

The Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool is a significant recreation amenity in the Comox Valley. Securing funding to address immediate repairs and conduct feasibility planning for its current location will enable the continued provision of this valued community asset as well as enable the discussions between City and CVRD staff to proceed regarding the future operating and funding model for the outdoor pool.

Please connect with City staff if any questions arise before the City's delegation.

Sincerely,



Geoff Garbutt
City Manager, (CAO)
City of Courtenay

Cc: Susie Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services, City of Courtenay
Chris Davidson, Director of Engineering Services, City of Courtenay
James Warren, CAO, Comox Valley Regional District
Doug DeMarzo, General Manager of Community Services, Comox Valley Regional District



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

STAFF REPORT

To: Council

File No.: 7710-05

From: Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

Date: January 24, 2024

Subject: Aquatic Needs Strategy Update - Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool What We Heard Report and 75th Anniversary

PURPOSE:

To provide Council with an update of the Aquatic Needs Strategy to include a summary of the outdoor aquatic public engagement findings in the attached Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool What We Heard Report (Attachment 1) and request Council's approval to proceed with providing free public admission for the outdoor pool's 75th season in 2024.

BACKGROUND:

The Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool was built in 1949 and is turning 75 years old this year. It is nearing the end of its useful life and requires capital investment in its renewal or redevelopment in order to continue operating and serving the Comox Valley into the future. Due to ageing aquatic infrastructure in the Comox Valley, the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) and City of Courtenay partnered to complete an Aquatics Needs Strategy in order to:

1. Develop a 10-year aquatic services implementation strategy that takes into consideration indoor and outdoor aquatic services in the Comox Valley over a 25-year time frame;
2. Conduct an options analysis for the renewal, replacement, or relocation of either or both the CVRD Sports Pool and the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool; and,
3. Make recommendations on the future of aquatic facilities and services in the Comox Valley.

The Draft Comox Valley Aquatic Needs Strategy (the "strategy") (Attachment 2) was developed from a baseline review of existing aquatic services in the region, and input and feedback received from an extensive community engagement process. The engagement process included a public survey, aquatic facility user group survey, and online interest group workshops and interviews. The strategy was presented to Council at the January 11, 2023 Council meeting. The key findings of the strategy are:

- Existing aquatic facilities are well utilized and highly valued community spaces.
- Currently there is no need to increase water capacity (no additional pools / aquatic facilities) in order to meet community need.
- There is community demand for enhanced aquatic leisure and wellness experiences.
- There is a need to focus on enhanced accessibility at aquatic facilities.
- Alignment with regional environmental objectives is of key importance.

The Aquatic Needs Strategy identified three strategic objectives to guide the Comox Valley Regional District and the City of Courtenay in the delivery of aquatic services:

1. High quality aquatic facilities that are adaptable and responsive to community need.
2. Provide accessible, affordable and inclusive facilities and services.
3. Facilities and services are well planned, maintained and managed.

In addition to the key findings, the strategy presented four main aquatics facility options to be considered:

1. Status Quo: maintain all facilities in current locations and configurations
2. Relocate aquatic services (outdoor pool and CV Sports Centre) to the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre Site with the three sub-options to consider:
 - a) Include a Wellness Expansion at the CV Aquatic Centre Site
 - b) Include an Outdoor Pool Expansion at the CV Aquatic Centre Site
 - c) Wellness and Outdoor Pool Expansion at the CV Aquatic Centre Site
3. Build Out A New Site (consolidating all three existing pools)
4. New Outdoor Pool with two options to consider:
 - a) New Outdoor pool at new site
 - b) New Outdoor pool at existing site

The strategy provided three recommendations were provided in light of the fact that the CVRD would be responsible for decisions on indoor aquatic options while the City of Courtenay would make decisions regarding the outdoor pool. The recommendations recognized the benefits that could be sought be co-relocating aquatic services including operational efficiencies, capital cost efficiencies through shared infrastructure, and opportunity to address emerging community priorities with a new facility design.

1. For indoor aquatics, phase out of the operation of the pool at the CV Sport Centre and relocate the aquatic services through an addition to the CV Aquatic Centre – option 2(a).
2. For outdoor aquatics, close the outdoor pool and relocate the aquatic services to the CV Aquatic Centre through the addition of a new outdoor pool at that site – option 2(b).
3. For indoor and outdoor pool combined options, the recommendation is to have both jurisdictions consider combining indoor and outdoor pools facilities and services at the CV Aquatic Centre – option 2(c).

After council received the draft strategy, the draft report was posted on the CVRD and City's websites for a period of one month to receive public comment and feedback.

The Comox Valley Recreation Commission identified Option 2(a) as their preferred option and incorporated it into the Comox Valley Recreation Commission [Strategic and Capital Planning Reports](#). This option articulates the relocation of indoor aquatic services at the CV Sport Centre to the CV Aquatic Centre in five to seven years, resulting in the expansion or addition of a new pool at the existing CV Aquatic Centre. The medium-term implementation of this option provides time for the CVRD to consider further requirements, including any impacts arising from City of Courtenay decisions on the future of the outdoor pool.

At the July 12, 2023 Council Meeting, Council received for information the "[Comox Valley Aquatic Service Needs Strategy Update](#)" briefing note. The briefing note referenced that additional capacity scenarios regarding changes in use or access to the 19 Wing Base Pool or outdoor pool were to be included in an update

to the Strategy. The briefing note also, spoke to the need for additional public engagement regarding the future of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor pool. While the Aquatic Needs Strategy received significant public engagement in the development phase, limited responses were received regarding the strategy's aquatic facility recommendations. Staff engaged RC Strategies to conduct additional public engagement in the Summer of 2023 specifically related to the future of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool. With the conclusion of the outdoor pool public engagement the What We Heard Report is being presented along with the updated Aquatic Strategy to form the final Comox Valley Aquatic Services Strategy for Courtenay.

DISCUSSION:

The Draft Comox Valley Aquatic Needs Strategy identified the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool as an important community asset that should be maintained both from an aquatic services and community amenity perspective. It is also acknowledged within the strategy that the Outdoor Pool is nearing the end of its useful life and requires renewal, replacement or redevelopment for continued operation.

The provision of recreational opportunities, including outdoor aquatic recreation, plays a crucial role in enhancing the physical and social well-being of individuals and communities. Beyond facilitating mobility and physical therapy, fostering social connections, physical literacy, and community unity, imparting life safety skills, and nurturing athlete development, aquatic facilities can cater to a spectrum of needs. Particularly, outdoor pools hold the potential to advance broader community social objectives, such as promoting reconciliation, combating racism, and fostering inclusivity by minimizing barriers to access and encouraging social development.

Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool - Public Engagement

Based on the findings and recommendations of the Aquatic Strategy, the City undertook a public engagement to assess the public's response to the facility options put forward for the future of the outdoor pool by the Aquatic Needs Strategy.

A survey was created and made available to the public for a period of four weeks from August to September 2023. To maximize participation, the survey was supported by an extensive engagement strategy which included posters in the recreation facilities, dedicated project website, social media promotional posts and promotional boards displayed at the outdoor pool entrance and pool deck. Survey participants were directed to an interactive storyboard mapping presentation¹ that summarized the key findings of the Aquatic Needs Strategy, the geographic location of each potential option (if applicable), and highlighted key information on the outdoor pool for the public to consider before completing the survey.

Survey respondents were informed that the outdoor pool is nearing the end of its facility life and requires repair, renewal or redevelopment in order to continue to provide access to outdoor aquatic services into the future. Respondents were informed that there is need for approximately \$1 million dollars in capital investment to address current conditions, with additional undetermined costs related to leak remediation issues. Additionally, it was stated that the outdoor pool does not meet current accessibility requirements and is located on the flood plain, making redevelopment options more complicated.

¹ [The Future of the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)

The storyboard presented the five options for the future of the outdoor pool that were identified through the strategy, including key messaging for the public to consider with each option including the approximate capital investment required based on estimates in the Aquatic Needs Strategy. This approach was undertaken to ensure that the public was well informed of the key findings and recommendations of the strategy before taking the survey. The five options presented for the future of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool are outlined in Table 1:

Table 1: Outdoor Pool Facility Options

Outdoor Pool Facility Option	Location	Capital Budget Estimate
Option 1: Status Quo	At existing site: Lewis Park	\$1 Million plus cost for repair and leak remediation (TBD)
Option 2: New outdoor pool at existing indoor aquatic facility site.	Co-located at the CV Aquatic Centre	\$12 Million
Option 3: New outdoor pool	At existing site: Lewis Park	\$18.2 million for replacement
Option 4: New outdoor pool at new site	To be determined	\$16.6 million (does not include land cost)
Option 5: Closure of outdoor pool without replacement or relocation	N/A	\$1 million for decommissioning (pending further study to confirm cost).

More detailed information on each option can be found in Attachment 3.

Outdoor Pool Public Engagement – What we Heard Report

The Courtenay and District Outdoor Pool What We Heard Report (Attachment 1) builds on the engagement findings from the strategy and provides further public input on the delivery of outdoor aquatics in the Comox Valley and specifically on the future of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool.

The public survey ran from August 14, 2023 date to September 12, 2023 and solicited over 1,800 responses from the community. An additional 884 comments were received in response to survey questions, which have been reviewed and presented in thematic findings. The number of responses as well as the substantial commentary provided by respondents are another indicator of the significant role this recreational asset plays in the community.

Survey Respondent Demographics

Respondents were asked to provide information regarding their place of residence, age, presence of children in the household and their ages, as well as how long they have lived in the region. Some key demographic highlights are summarized below:

Table 2: Place of Residence

Where do you live?		
	Survey Respondents	2021 Census*
City of Courtenay	54%	39%
Comox Valley Regional District	20%	34%
Town of Comox	16%	21%
Village of Cumberland	7%	6%
K'ómoks First Nation	<1%	N/A
Other	3%	-

Respondents were also asked to share information on their use of the outdoor pool. Two thirds of respondents visited the outdoor pool in the last two years. However, it is significant to note that over one third of respondents did not visit the pool in either or both of the last two years (2022 and 2023). This is a significant factor in considering the feedback and preferences of respondents regarding the future of the outdoor pool as it demonstrates its community value beyond just those individuals who access the service. While the survey responses indicate that there is greater use amongst the younger respondents, there is also multi-generational use of the outdoor pool.

Survey Key Findings

Respondents were asked questions to confirm the findings and recommendations of the Aquatic Needs Strategy and to seek clarity on preferred options for the future of the outdoor pool. Overall, the Outdoor Pool public engagement findings are fairly consistent with the engagement results of the aquatic strategy. As confirmed in the Aquatic Needs Strategy engagement, the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor pool is a highly valued community asset with three quarters of the respondents strongly agreeing that the outdoor pool is an important community facility.

Key Themes

The outdoor pool is widely recognized as a highly valued family friendly community asset that is centrally located. In considering the future of the outdoor pool, respondents indicated it is important to bear in mind the geographical distribution and accessibility of recreation facilities and amenities across Courtenay, and the Comox Valley. Respondents indicated some concern about the capital investment required, the existing location being on a flood plain, and expressed concern with the current lack of parking and connection to public transit.

The public is using the pool to experience fun and enjoyment, socialize, meet new people, exercise, and for physical well-being. A large number of respondents (80%) said they would sometimes pick the outdoor pool over an indoor pool. The preference for an outdoor pool use was mainly due to:

1. Providing a unique summer recreation activity;

2. Respite from summer heat; and
3. A preference for outdoor swimming.

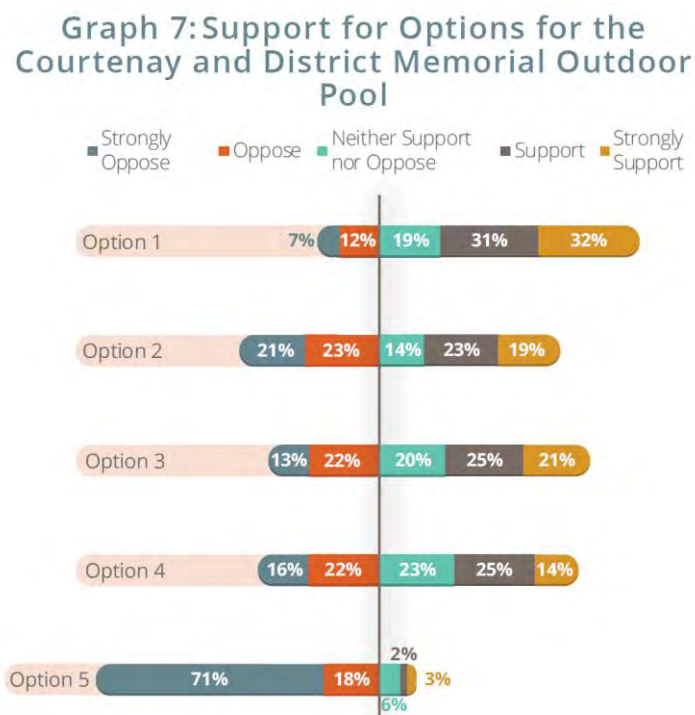
Respondents indicated they do not use the outdoor pool because of: crowding, lack of parking, the condition and cleanliness of the facility, or preference to swim in natural aquatic assets such as the ocean, lake, or river.

In summary, based on the feedback received, respondents confirmed the community value of the outdoor pool as they enjoy the outdoor aquatic experience and prefer it over indoor aquatics while provides an inherent social value. Barriers to use include issues with the current facility (condition, accessibility), crowding due to high use, and parking – suggesting that making improvements to the facility will increase its usage.

Survey Results – Preferred Options

The key objective of the Outdoor Pool public engagement was to garner feedback and understand preferences regarding the facility options for the future of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool. Respondents were asked to rank their preference of the five presented options from least preferred to most preferred. The results are shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Graph 7: Support for Options for the Outdoor Pool

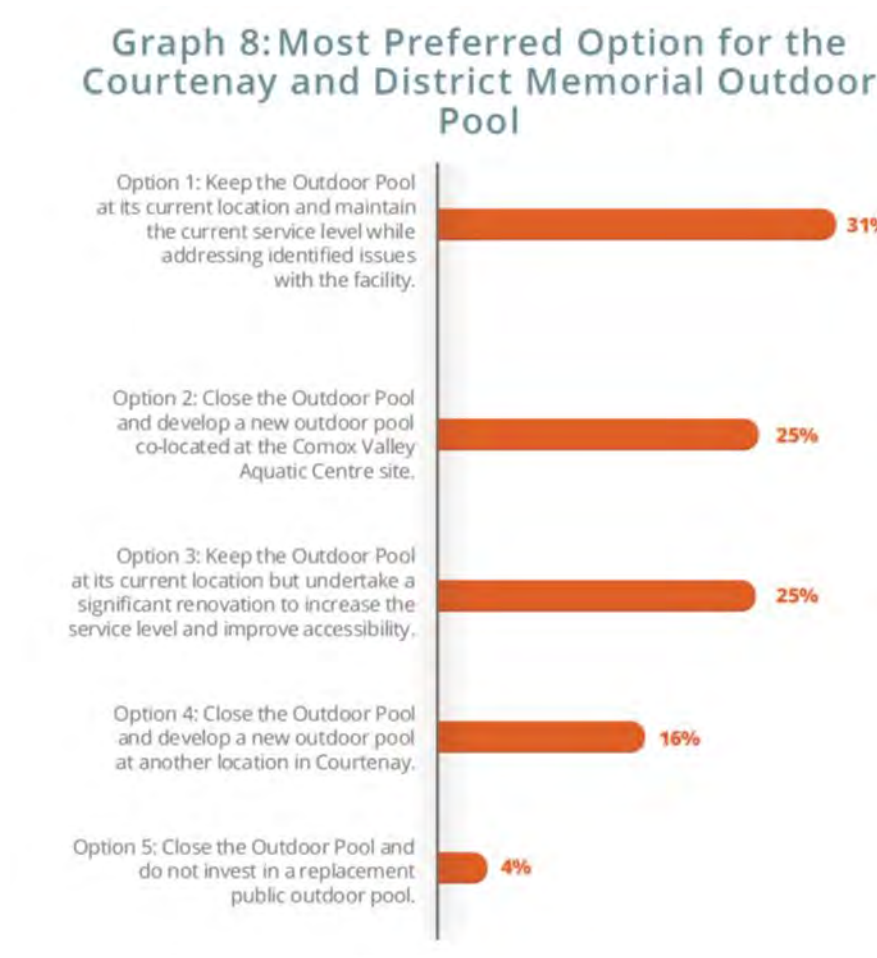


Results demonstrate that the preferred option is to maintain the Outdoor Pool at its current location and maintain the current service level while addressing identified issues with the facility, with the next most supported option being a significant renewal of the outdoor pool at its current location. These two

preferences are also strongly supported by those who did not visit the pool in 2022 or 2023. 89% of respondents opposed or strongly opposed the permanent closure of the outdoor pool.

Respondents were then asked to indicate their most preferred option, only being able to select one of the options for the future of the Outdoor Pool. The results are shown in Table 4:

Table 4: Graph 8: Most Preferred Option for the Outdoor Pool



Results align with the ranking of options described above, with the most preferred option being the maintenance of the pool at its current location. This preference is closely followed by redeveloping the pool on site or redeveloping at the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre, followed by looking for opportunities for relocating it to another location. Only 4% of respondents indicated their preferred option was the permanent closure of the outdoor pool.

Responses were almost split in regards to where the outdoor pool should be located. Over half (56%) preferred an option where the outdoor pool remained at its current location (Option 1 – 31% and Option 3- 25%) while 41% supported the closure of the outdoor pool and development of a new pool at another location (Option 2 – 25% and Option 4 -16%).

Survey Results – Conclusions

Both the Aquatic Needs Strategy and the Outdoor Pool Public engagement have clearly and consistently demonstrated that the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool is a valued community asset, even by those residents who do not use its programs and services. It is clear from the public's response that there is strong support for outdoor aquatic services in Courtenay and the Comox Valley, and strong support for the continued provision of an outdoor pool. Over half of respondents to the Outdoor Pool engagement prefer the pool to remain at its current location, with the remaining half been split on relocating it to the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre or another location in Courtenay.

When the results of the preferred options are considered alongside the other survey responses and comments, as well as the community engagement results of the Aquatics Need Strategy, the following themes emerge regarding the future of the Outdoor Pool:

- It is a highly valued community asset that serves a wide demographic of individuals but requires improvements to meet today's needs:
 - Improved facility accessibility including change rooms and access to the pool
 - Improved amenities to enhance the experience, especially to increase leisure experiences
 - A need to address the feedback that the pool is too congested or busy for some and thus they choose not to use it
- The current location is centrally located and any relocation decisions should take into consideration the following:
 - Geographic distribution of aquatic services in Courtenay and the Comox Valley, with concerns raised over locating all services at one location (i.e. the Aquatic Centre)
 - Accessibility and parking, with consistent themes around transit access, sufficient parking, and ease of accessing by active transportation (i.e. walking or rolling), especially for children and youth
- Questions and concerns about the level of investment required, especially in light of its current location in the flood plain
 - Individuals indicated that their main reason for selecting option 1 as their preferred option was due to its lower cost implications

When asked to prioritize the factors that they think the City should consider in prioritizing investment in one facility or amenity over another, respondents indicated that community benefit was the most important criteria, followed by demand from residents and then overall costs of either maintaining or operating the asset.

Outdoor Pool Next Steps

With the completion of the Comox Valley Aquatics Needs Strategy and the Outdoor Aquatics public engagement, staff will incorporate the recommendations, feedback, and results into recommendations for Council's consideration regarding the future of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool. This information will be considered alongside the results of recently completed condition assessments to provide options for Council's consideration regarding continued investment into the outdoor pool. Following Council's direction, staff will engage with the Comox Valley Regional District regarding financial considerations for the CVRD Recreation Grant Service as well as any impacts and considerations on service levels at CVRD aquatic facilities if applicable.

Report Back on Free Public Admission Pilot at the Outdoor Pool

The Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor pool offers unique benefits to residents, in addition to the community and social value it offers as an informal and low barrier gathering place. At the July 23, 2023 Council Meeting, staff recommended that Council consider the proposal to provide free public admission for the remainder of the outdoor pool 2023 season to encourage increased use, enhance access to low barrier recreational activities, and provide additional options for respite from the summer heat. Following Council’s direction, a free public admission pilot was offered at the Courtenay and District Outdoor Pool from August 8, 2023 until the end of the season on September 1, 2023.

Table 5 provides a summary of pool attendance in July versus August, 2023, comparing usage during regular admission fees in July and free public admission in August. Overall, there was an increase in users to the outdoor pool during the following scheduled program times: Lunch Lengths, Open Swim and Evening Lengths. Please note that admissions during the pilot were manually tracked versus those in July which are tracked through the Recreation registration software system or point of sale system and as such may not fully capture all actual visits or admissions.

Table 5: Public Admissions

Program	July 2023	August 2023
Early Bird Lengths	237	195
Lunch Lengths	315	334
Adapted Swim	165	143
Open Swim	3,252	3,888
Evening Lengths	68	71
Family Swim	72	40
Totals	4,109	4,671

Samples of public feedback from the free admission pilot was as follows:

“This is brilliant! I am one of those people who thinks all recreational facilities should be free. The people who need it the most can’t afford to pay for multiple uses. Thank you for doing this.”

“What a great group of people working at the outdoor pool!”

Anecdotal feedback also includes observations that the public accessed the outdoor pool at different times of day, including increased attendance in later hours of public swim sessions – likely due to cost no longer being a factor in attending the pool for shorter periods of time.

Table 6 Financial impacts of Free Admission Pilot

Outdoor Pool Annual Budget				
Revenue	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2023 Actual
				YTD (Unaudited)
Public Swimming	\$ 35,000	\$ 65,795	\$ 31,000	\$ 25,064
Lessons	\$ 30,000	\$ 15,296	\$ 49,000	\$ 52,952
Misc. Revenue	\$ 500		\$ 500	
Pool Rental	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,873	\$ 12,000	\$ 13,387
CVRD Operating Grant	\$ 96,700	\$ 96,700	\$ 101,500	\$ 101,500
Total Revenue	\$ 173,200	\$ 189,664	\$ 194,000	\$ 192,902

As summarized in Table 6, the financial impact of the free public admission pilot was approximately \$6,000 in reduced revenues for public swimming than budgeted for 2023.² No additional expenses were incurred as a result of the pilot.

The Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool continues to see increased participation and usage since its reopening in 2021 following its COVID-19 related closure in 2019. Along with the public feedback described above and the results of the free admission pilot program, it is clear that this is a valued community asset that provides access to critical life skills that contributed to drowning prevention, enjoyable and safe summer leisure opportunities, and serves diverse demographics within the community.

With the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool entering its 75th year of operation in 2024, it is staff’s recommendation that the free public admission pilot be extended to include the entire season in 2024 in celebration of this incredible community asset and its services. It is expected that the projected revenue reduction of free public admission for the 2024 season would be approximately \$31,000. If supported by Council, staff would incorporate the financial impacts into the 2024 Financial Plan for Council’s consideration.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

Parks and Recreation Masterplan, 2019

Recommendation 4.1.3: Plan for the short-term operation and long-term replacement of the outdoor pool with a communications and engagement process.

- Provide information to the community regarding the age and condition of the outdoor pool, the challenges of the location, and the maintenance and capital improvement costs.
- Undertake a feasibility study for replacing the outdoor pool activities
- Consult with the community regarding the options identified in the feasibility study

Official Community Plan, 2022

- Parks and Recreation Policy (PR3): Ensure appropriate and sufficient parklands, play spaces, and recreation infrastructure are provided as a form of essential social and ecological infrastructure to meet the needs of the community and accommodate growth.

² Note: the above financial summary is an excerpt from the year to date unaudited financial statements and may be subject to year-end adjustments.

- Parks and Recreation Policy (PR 13): Maintain and invest in Lewis Recreation, Lewis and Sims Parks as centralized, high –intensity regional recreation destinations intended to serve the indoor and outdoor creation needs of the community
- Parks and Recreation Policy (PR14): Continue to review plans for expansion or renovation of existing recreational facilities in accordance with the Parks and Recreation master plan and particularly within the Town and Neighbourhood Centres and Corridors.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Aquatic Service Strategy project budget was in the 2023 Capital Budget with the City’s portion of the strategy funded through the CVRD Recreation Commission Grant Function. The Courtenay and District Memorial Pool community engagement carried out this past summer was funded through the 2023 Operating Budget.

The expected projected revenue reduction of free public admission for the 2024 season would be \$31,000

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

This project is a strategic priority for Recreation, Culture, and Community Services and has been identified in staff members' annual work plans. Involvement from other City departments is required as draft recommendations and implementation strategies are developed with the condition assessment of the outdoor pool being led by Engineering Services.

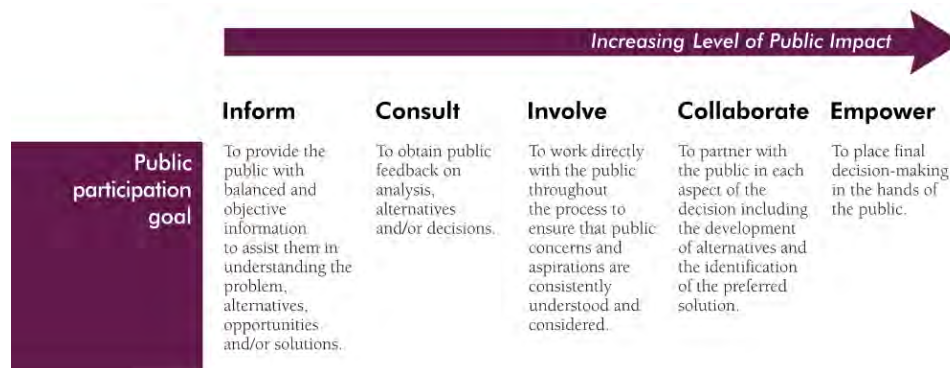
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Parks and Recreation - Complete recreation facilities need assessments and capital improvements: Florence Filberg Centre, Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool, Lewis Centre

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Staff consulted the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:



OPTIONS:

1. THAT the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool What We Heard Report (Attachment 1) and the Comox Valley Aquatic Services Strategy (Attachment 2) be received for information to form the final Comox Valley Aquatic Services Strategy for Courtenay; and
2. THAT Council direct staff to include free public admission for the Outdoor Pool's 75th year in the 2024 Financial Plan.
3. THAT the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool What We Heard Report (Attachment 1) and the Comox Valley Aquatic Services Strategy (Attachment 2) be received for information to form the final Comox Valley Aquatic Services Strategy for Courtenay.
4. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Courtenay and District Memorial Pool What We Heard Report
2. Comox Valley Aquatic Services Strategy
3. Outdoor Pool Options: Interactive Story Board Map Summary and Facility Options

Prepared by: Joy Chan, Manager of Business Administration, Recreation, Culture and Community Services

Reviewed by: Susie Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture and Community Services

Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)

Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool Engagement

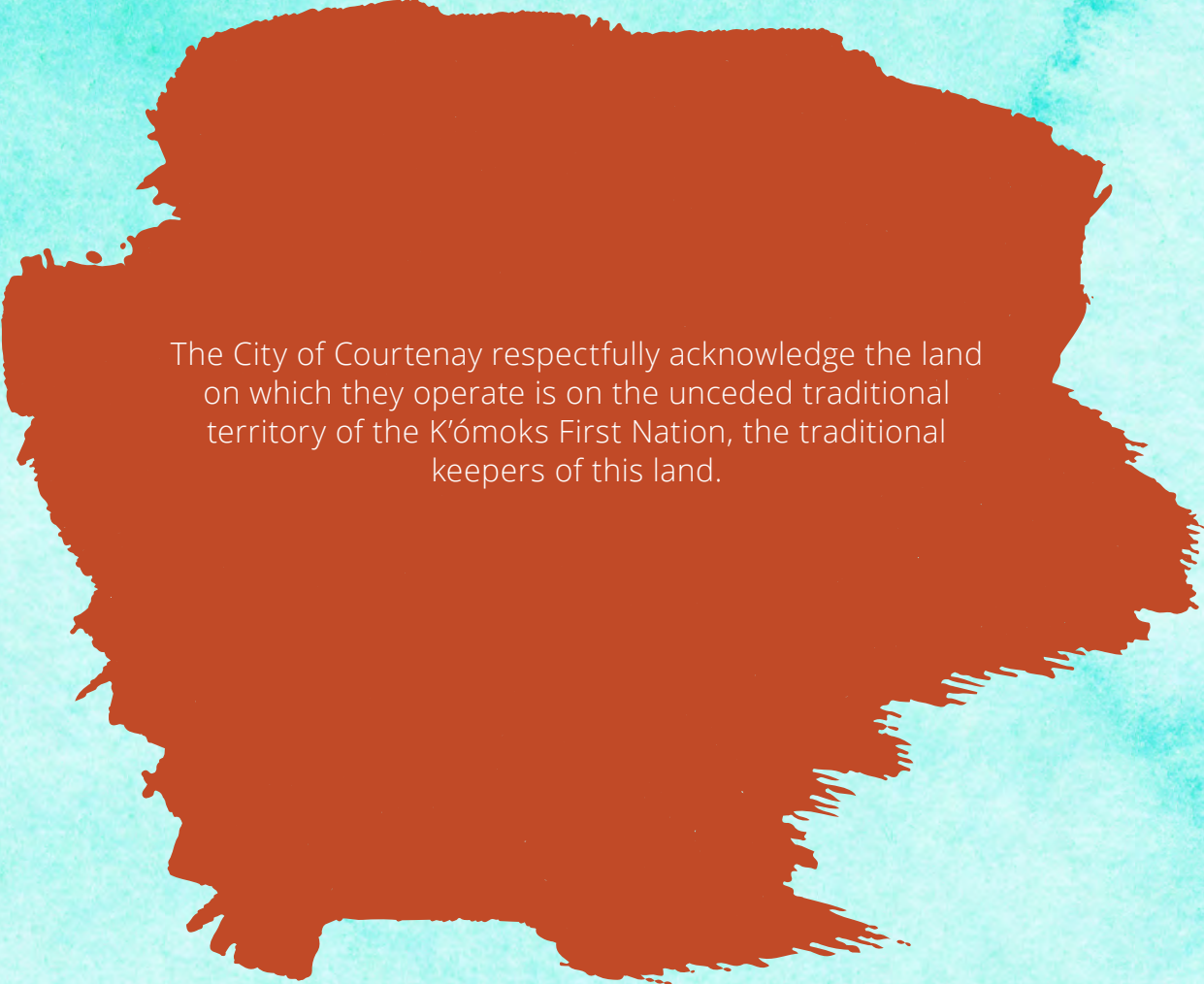
WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

JANUARY 2024

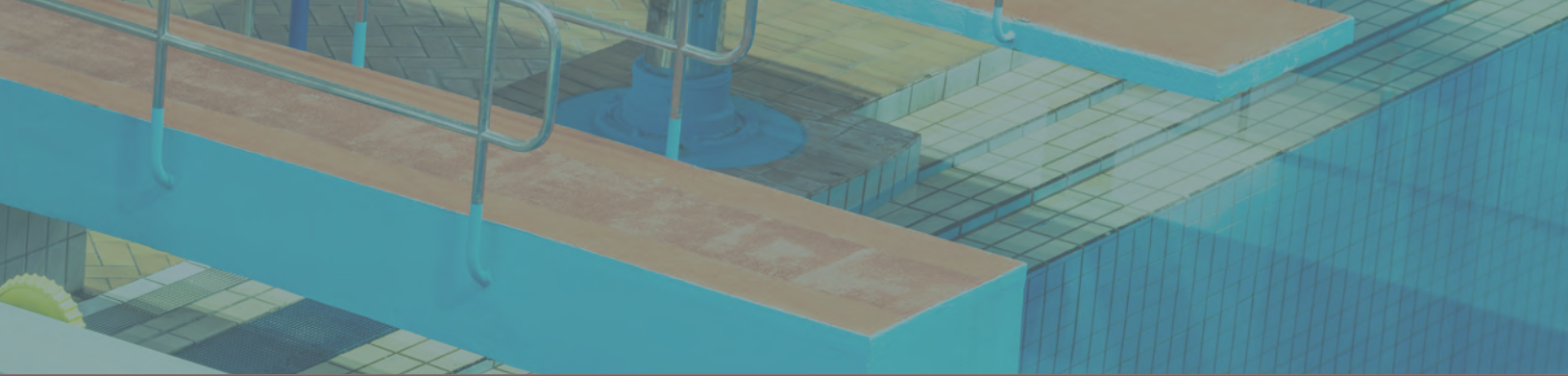


City of
Courtenay





The City of Courtenay respectfully acknowledge the land on which they operate is on the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) and the City of Courtenay enrich the lives of Valley residents and visitors through the provision of three aquatics facilities: the Comox Valley Sports Centre, Comox Valley Aquatic Centre, and the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool. To effectively plan for aquatics provision in the Comox Valley, and to reflect changing demands and financial realities, the CVRD and City commissioned an Aquatic Needs Strategy.

Following on from the Aquatic Needs Strategy, the City of Courtenay completed additional community engagement specifically relating to the future of the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool. A survey was fielded from mid August to mid September to gather more information from the public about the Outdoor Pool, in particular related to a preferred future. In total 1,800 responses were collected. This report presents the complete findings from this survey.

Conclusions

Overall, the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool is a highly valued community facility with approximately two-thirds of respondents having visited the Outdoor Pool in the last two years. While visitation is greater amongst younger respondents, particularly those with younger children, all ages of respondents do use the Outdoor Pool.

Approximately three-quarters of respondents strongly agree that an outdoor pool is an important community facility to have in the Comox Valley Region and the City of Courtenay. Those respondents who did not visit the Outdoor Pool in either 2023 or 2022 agreed about the importance of the pool in the community, in Courtenay, and the Comox Valley.

The outdoor pool is commonly used to experience fun and enjoyment, to socialize and meet new people, and to exercise and look after physical health. Common reasons why people do not make use of the outdoor pool include issues with crowding, parking, the condition and cleanliness, and a preference for ocean / lake / river swimming.

When considering options for the future of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool, Option 1 – keep the pool at its current location and maintain current service level – received the greatest amount of support and the least amount of opposition. Option 5 – close the outdoor pool and do not invest in a replacement pool – was the least supported option by respondents and the most opposed. Although there was strong consensus about the value of an outdoor pool to the community, opinions differed on where the pool should be located. Over half (56%) preferred an option that kept the Outdoor Pool on its current site while 41% supported the development of a new pool at another site.

When considering decision making criteria, community benefit is clearly seen as the most important consideration. Responding to community demand is a second criteria strongly supported. While important, cost is considered a less critical decision-making criteria according to survey respondents.



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1

INTRODUCTION

Recreation provision is important to the physical and social wellbeing of individuals and communities. Aquatic facilities (both indoor and outdoor) are important elements of recreation provision. Public pools provide opportunities for residents to participate in a variety of activities and provide important community benefits. From mobility and physical therapy opportunities, social connection and community cohesion, learning life safety skills, and athlete development, aquatic facilities can address many different needs. These facilities, especially outdoor pools, can also support broad community social goals of supporting reconciliation, anti-racism, and inclusion through reduced barriers to access and the social development that occurs through community participation in leisure activities.

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) and the City of Courtenay provide three recreation facilities to area residents: the Comox Valley Sports Centre, Comox Valley Aquatic Centre, and the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool. To plan for the future of aquatics in the Comox Valley, the CVRD and City completed an Aquatic Needs Strategy in April 2023.

The Strategy outlines a rationale for investment from the CVRD and the City in aquatics services and includes recommendations on the future of the three aquatic facilities. A key recommendation of the Strategy is to consolidate all aquatics facilities at the Comox Valley Aquatics Centre, including the outdoor pool, to capture several benefits including the following:

- Operational efficiencies (staffing, energy systems).
- Capital cost efficiencies (shared change facilities and mechanical / support spaces).
- Opportunity to address emerging community priorities with a new facility design.

Findings from a survey fielded during the development of the Strategy included approximately one-third (31%) of respondents expressing dissatisfaction with the condition, accessibility, and features of the outdoor pool (47% were satisfied). Crowding at the outdoor pool was noted as was a lack of amenities and features as well change rooms in need of updating.

After the development of the Aquatic Needs Strategy, the City of Courtenay undertook additional community consultation regarding the future of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool. From mid-August through to mid-September a survey was fielded with the public to better understand their use of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool and their preferred future of outdoor aquatics in the Comox Valley. This report presents the findings of that engagement.



2

ABOUT THE SURVEY

A survey was fielded to residents of the Comox Valley to learn about their utilization of the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool and their thoughts on its future and that of outdoor aquatics generally.

The survey was primarily fielded online however residents were able to request hard copies of the questionnaire. An ArcGIS StoryMap was developed to support respondents understanding of the options being considered for the outdoor pool. Refer to Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire and Appendix B for screen shots of the interactive the ArcGIS StoryMap. The survey gathered responses from August 14th through to September 12, 2023; over that time 1800 responses were gathered.

A variety of tactics were utilized to promote the survey including the following:

- Promotion on the City's website;
- Promotion on the City's social media; and
- Posters at the Outdoor Pool.

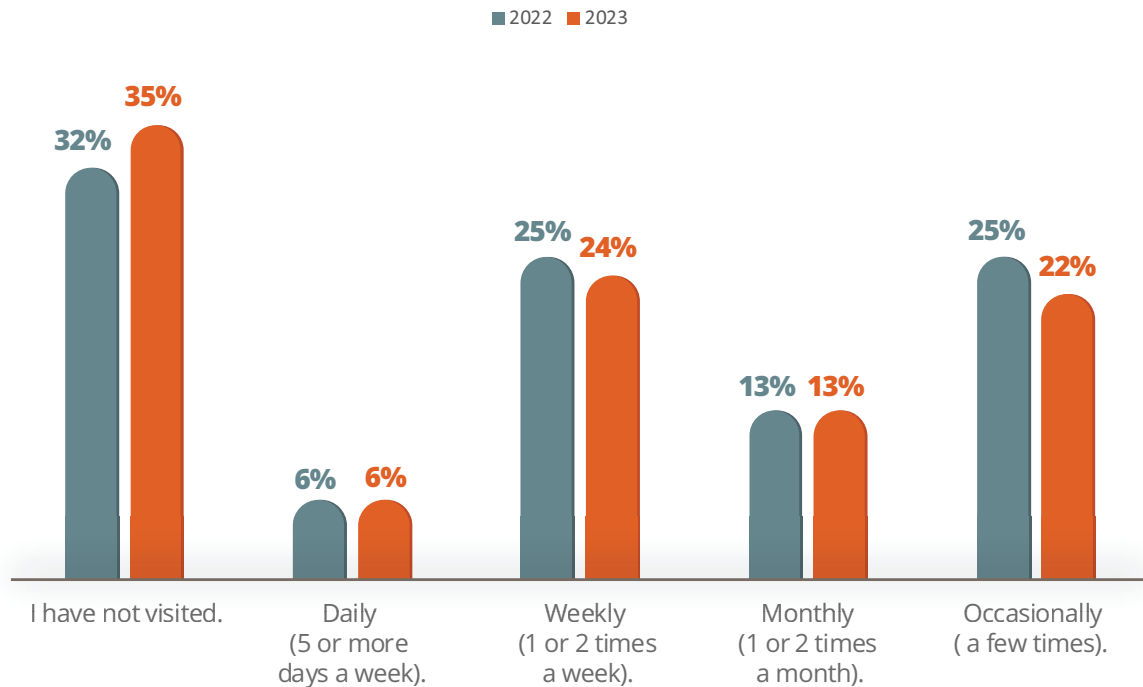
Findings of the survey cannot be considered representative of the community, but findings provide good information that the City can use to support decision making.

2.1 Survey Findings

The findings are presented in the order the questions were posed in the survey. They reflect the proportion of respondents who answered the question as not all respondents answered each question. The findings were also examined by some subsegments¹. Where appropriate and sizable differences exist, mention of the subsegment findings is made in the report. Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%. Findings to similar questions posed in the resident survey fielded during the development of the Aquatic Needs Strategy (February – March 2022) are presented alongside this Survey's findings (where available).

¹ Subsegments include: Household composition (households with children compared to those without children); households with children aged 0-9 years compared to households with children aged 10-19 years; Residency (City of Courtenay, Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD), Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland), Age of respondent (39 yrs and younger, 40-59 yrs, 60-69 yrs, and 70 yrs and older), and those who hadn't visited the pool in 2022 or 2023 compared to those who had visited in those two years.

Graph 1: Frequency of Visiting the Memorial Outdoor Pool



2.1.1 Utilization

To begin the survey, respondents were asked to identify the frequency at which they visited the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool in 2022 and in 2023. As shown in Graph 1, frequency of visitation did not vary much between 2022 and 2023. Approximately one-third of respondents (32-35%) said they did not visit the outdoor pool. A similar proportion (30-31%) visited the pool at least weekly (including daily and weekly).

Aquatic Needs Strategy

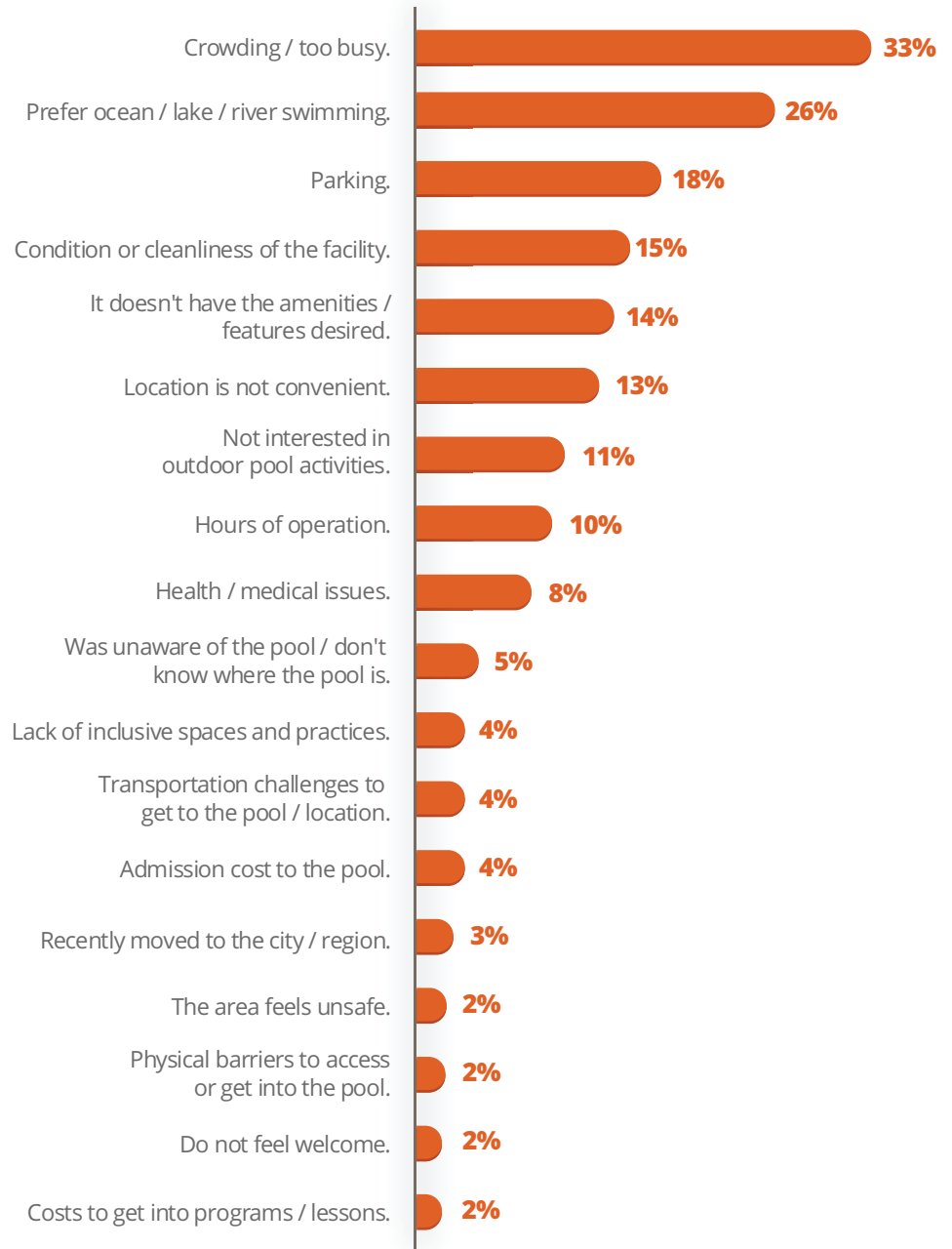
- 56% of respondents had used the Outdoor Pool as an active participant with the previous three years.

Subsegment Analysis

- Respondents with children in the home are more likely to have visited the Outdoor Pool in 2023 (74%) compared with respondents without children in the home (51%). This pattern is similar for 2022, where 77% of respondents with children in the home visited the Outdoor Pool compared to 55% of those without children in the home.
- Respondents with children who are aged between 0-9 years are more likely to have visited the Outdoor Pool in 2023 (81%) than respondents with children aged 10-19 years (70%).
- There is a correlation between respondents' ages and visitation to the Outdoor Pool. In both 2023 and 2022 younger respondents are more likely to visit the pool than older respondents. In 2023, 72% of respondents 39 years of age and younger visited the pool compared with 66% of respondents 40-59 years of age, 57% of respondents 60-69 years of age, and 48% of respondents 70 years and older. A similar dynamic occurred for 2022.

Respondents who indicated that they did not visit the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool in 2022 or 2023 were then asked to identify their reasons for not using the pool. As illustrated in Graph 2, the most common reason is that the pool is too crowded / busy (33%). Approximately one-quarter (26%) of respondents indicated that they prefer to swim in natural environments including oceans lakes and rivers. Parking (18%), condition or cleanliness of the facility (15%), lack of desired amenities / features (14%), and inconvenient location (13%) are the other primary reasons. Refer to the graph for additional findings².

Graph 2: Reasons for Not Using the Courtenay & District Pool



Aquatic Needs Strategy

Factors Limiting Use of Outdoor Pool

- Crowding / too busy 45%
- Prefer ocean / lake / river swimming 28%
- Hours of operation 20%
- Lack of desired amenities / features 16%
- Condition or cleanliness 15%
- Parking 14%
- Location is not convenient 13%

² Respondents were informed that “admission cost to the pool” was to be considered prior to the free admission pilot program that started on August 8 when considering whether “admission cost to the pool” is a reason for not using the pool.

Other reasons that respondents mentioned for not using the outdoor pool include the feeling that the pool is more designed for children and that respondents are visiting less now that their children have grown.

"It's an "OK" pool where it is. It could be bigger because of the crowding.."

(Survey respondent)

Subsegment Analysis

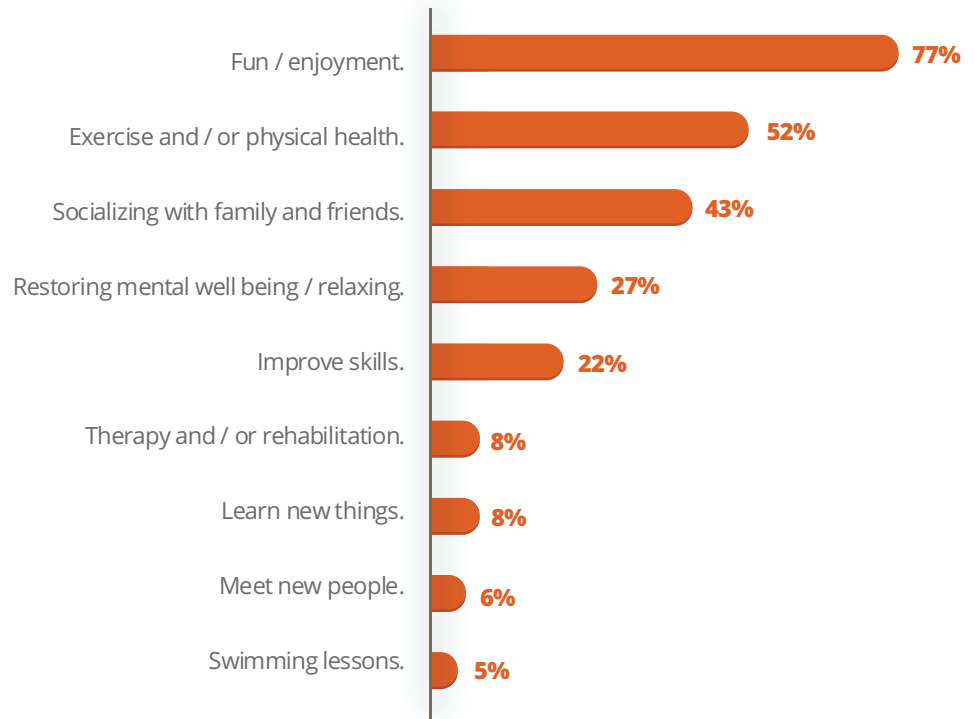
- Respondents with children in the home are more likely (24%) to identify parking as a reason for not visiting the Outdoor Pool compared to respondents without children (11%).
- Respondents from Cumberland were more likely to say the inconvenient location is a reason for not using the Outdoor Pool (51%) than respondents from Comox (18%), CVRD (10%), and Courtenay (8%).
- Respondents 39 years and younger are more likely to identify the following as reasons for not using the Outdoor Pool compared to other respondents:
 - » Preference for ocean / lake / river swimming (31%) compared to 25% (40-59 yrs), 18% (60-69 yrs), and 14% (70 yrs and older).



Respondents who had visited the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool in 2022 or 2023 were asked to identify their main reasons for using the pool. As illustrated in Graph 3, approximately three-quarters of respondents (77%) said they visit the Outdoor Pool for fun / enjoyment, while approximately half (52%) said their main reason is for exercise and physical health. Just under half of respondents (43%) said they visit the Outdoor Pool to socialize with family and friends. Refer to the graph for additional findings.

Other common reasons respondents mentioned for their use of the Outdoor Pool are for cooling off and enjoying the outdoors in the summer months. Some respondents also mentioned that their children visit the outdoor pool during summer camp.

Graph 3: Main Reason for Visiting the Courtenay & District Outdoor Pool



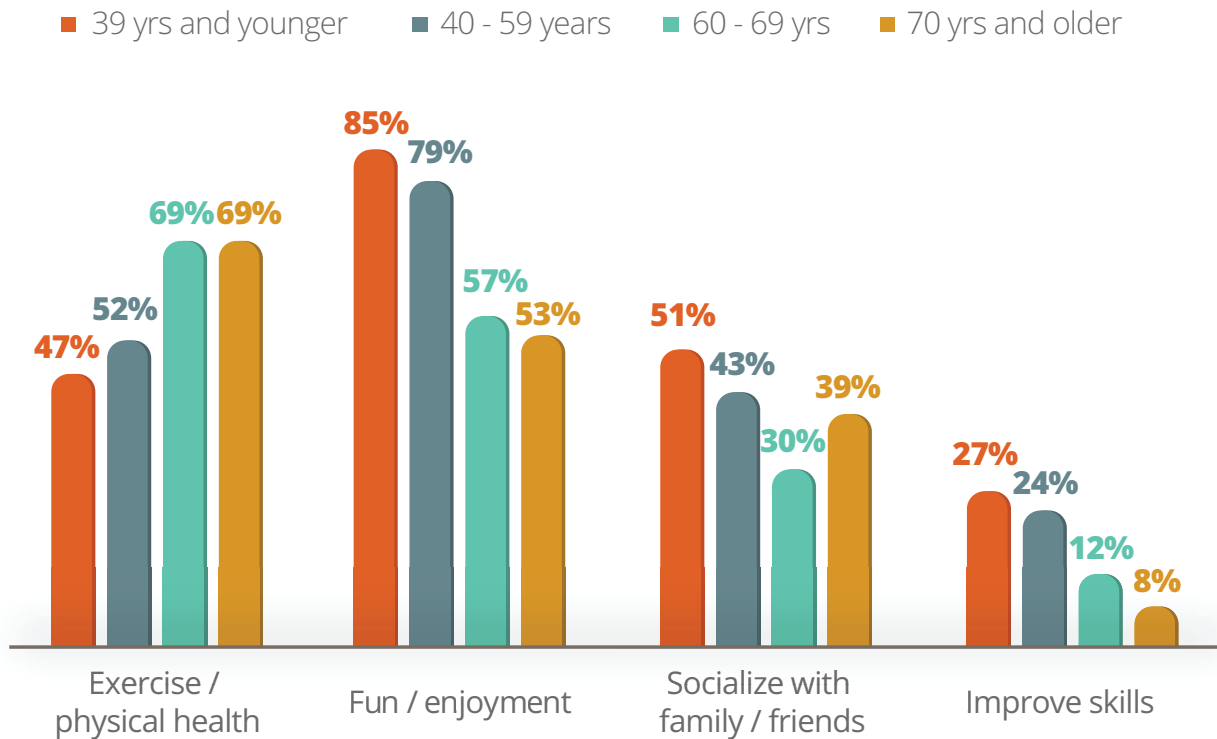
Subsegment Analysis

- Respondents with children in the home are less likely to use the Outdoor Pool for exercise/ physical health (45%) compared to respondents without children in the home (72%). Moreover, those with children are more likely to visit the pool for fun/ enjoyment reasons (86%) than those without children (55%).
- Respondents from Comox (50%), Courtenay (45%), and CVRD (40%) are more likely to say they visit the outdoor pool to socialize with family and friends than do respondents from Cumberland (28%).

“The outdoor pool is much more than a pool. It’s a centrally located gathering place that encourages community building and supportive relationships. The location is important so everyone can access it.”

(Survey respondent)

Graph 3a: Main Reasons for Visiting the Outdoor Pool
(By Age of Respondent)



2.1.2 Value

Respondents were provided with several statements and asked to indicate the extent with which they agree with each. As shown in Graph 4, approximately three-quarters of all respondents (78%) strongly agree that it is important for the Comox Valley region to have a public outdoor pool. A similar proportion (74%) strongly agree that the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool is an important community facility. Just under half (47%) of respondents strongly agree that the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool is an important part of their summer recreation experience. Refer to the graph for more findings.

Subsegment Analysis

- While respondents who had visited the Outdoor Pool in the past two years are more likely to agree with the statements than those who had not visited the pool, both segments of respondents agree that the Outdoor pool is an important community facility; important to have in the Comox Valley; and important for the City of Courtenay to have.

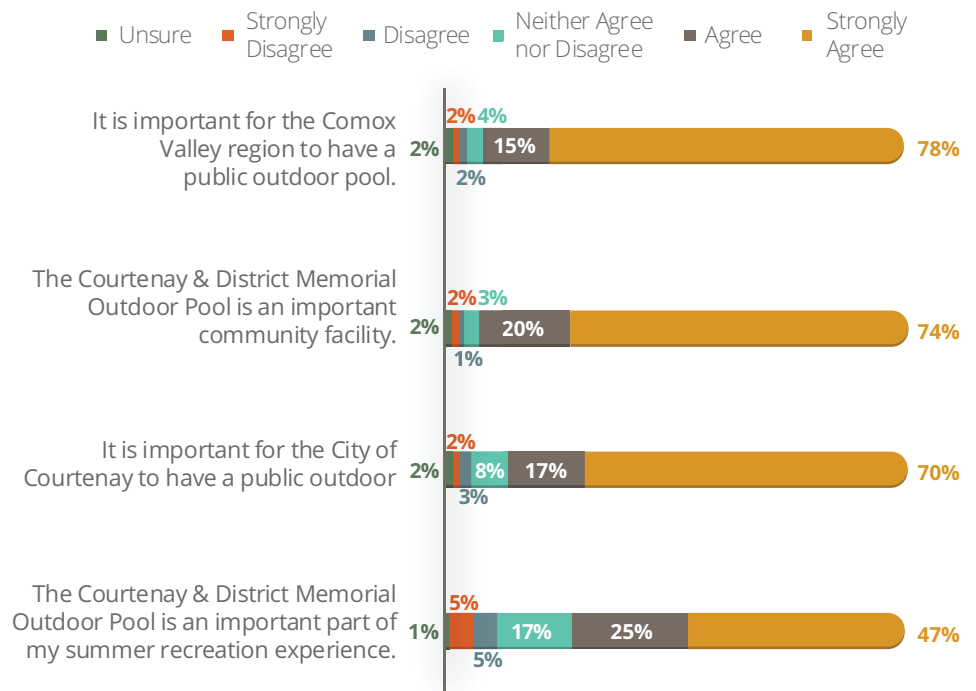
Aquatic Needs Strategy

Agreement Levels

- Comox Valley should have outdoor public pools 77%

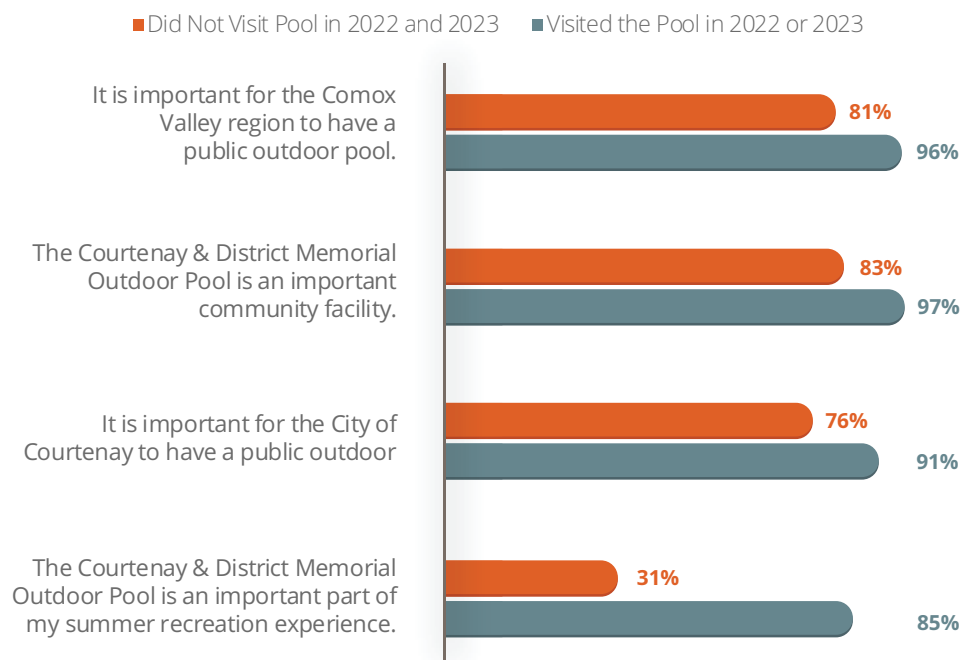
*"This is an important staple in the valley and I enjoy being able to go there week after week in the summertime with my children as I did growing up. It's important to keep these established areas in the valley. It's what makes it such an enjoyable place to live."
(Survey respondent)*

Graph 4: Agreement With Value Statements



Graph 4a: Agreement with Value Statements

(Visited the Outdoor Pool Last 2 Years vs Did Not Visit the Outdoor Pool)

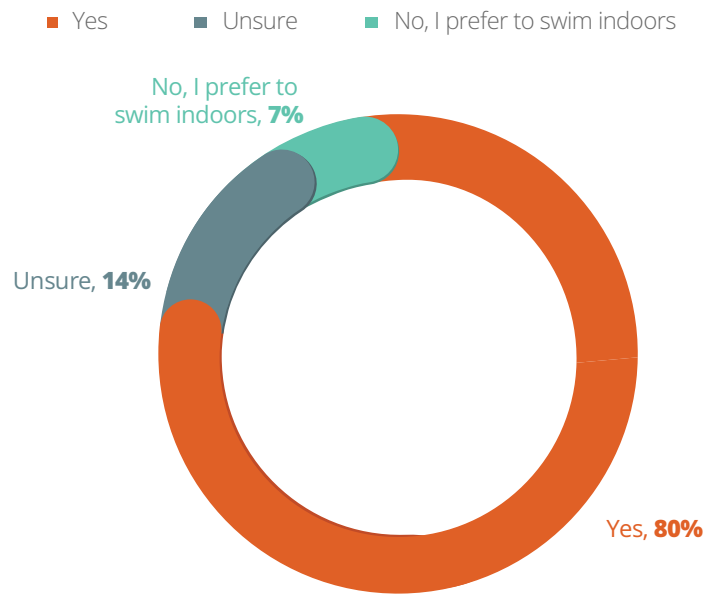


Respondents were next asked whether there are times in which they would use the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool instead of an indoor pool in the region. As illustrated in the following graph (Graph 5), over three-quarters of respondents (80%) said they would sometimes pick the outdoor pool over an indoor pool.

Subsegment Analysis

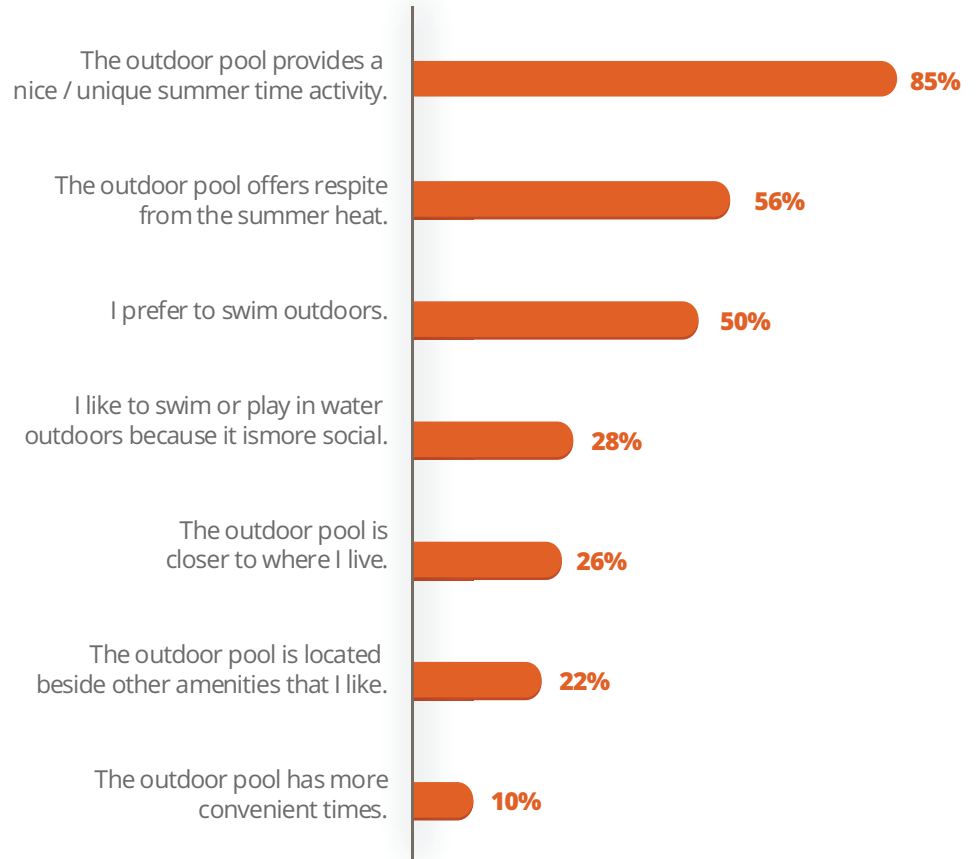
- Respondents who visited the outdoor pool in 2022 or 2023 are more likely (87%) to choose the outdoor pool instead of an indoor pool at times than respondents who did not visit the outdoor pool in 2022 or 2023 (56%).

Graph 5: Would Choose to Use the Outdoor Pool Instead of Indoor Pool at Times



Main reasons for respondents' decision to use the outdoor pool instead of the indoor pool include the outdoor pool providing a unique summer recreation activity (85%). Approximately half (56%) also felt the pool offers respite from the summer heat, and half (50%) expressed an overall preference for outdoor swimming. Refer to Graph 6 for more information.

Graph 6: Reasons for Using the Outdoor Pool Instead of the Indoor Pool



*"The services provided by the city are very important to the citizens that live here. They provide children, teens and adults with enjoyment and memories for life. Access to Swimming is a life skill and knowledge of water and water safety should be a priority especially since this is an ocean community. Everyone should have access. As taxpayers, we want good quality services that are equitable for everyone."
(Survey respondent)*

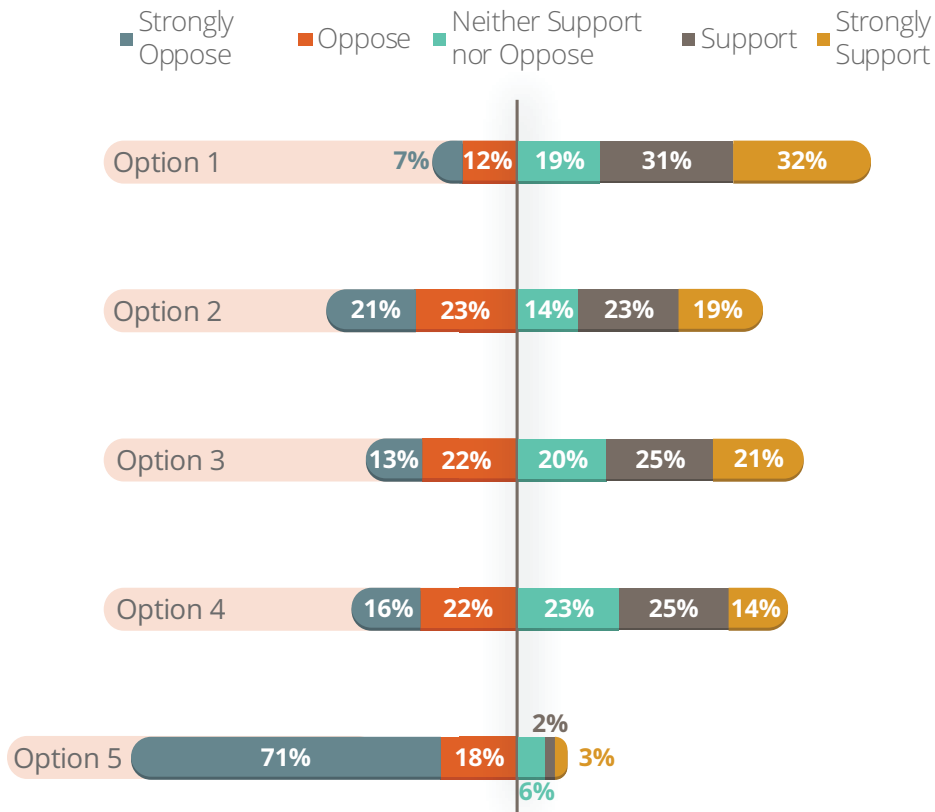
Subsegment Analysis

- Respondents with children are more likely to say they use the Outdoor Pool because it provides a nice / unique summer-time activity (90%) than those without children in the home (78%). Those with children are more likely (61%) to say they use the outdoor because it provides respite from the summer heat, than those without children (48%).
- Respondents from Cumberland (38%) and Courtenay (37%) are more likely to use the Outdoor Pool than one of the indoor pools because of it being closer to where they live than respondents from CVRD (16%) and Comox (4%),
- Respondents who visited the Outdoor Pool in 2022 or 2023 are more likely to identify the following as reasons for choosing the Outdoor Pool instead of an indoor pool compared to respondents who did not visit the outdoor pool in 2022 or 2023.
 - » Prefer to swim outdoors (53% vs 37%).
 - » Outdoor pool offers respite from summer heat (59% vs 42%).

2.1.3 Options

The Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool is 74 years old and is nearing the end of its useful life. It requires substantial investment to continue to offer outdoor aquatic opportunities. Respondents were presented with a series of options for the future of the Outdoor Pool in Courtenay and were asked to indicate how strongly they support each option. As illustrated in Graph 7, the greatest amount of opposition was for Option 5 – close the Outdoor Pool and not replace it. Approximately three-quarters (71%) of respondents strongly opposed this choice. Option 1 (maintain the current service and address its issues) received the greatest amount of support with approximately two-thirds (63%) saying they strongly support it (32%) or support it (31%). Refer to the graph for further details.

Graph 7: Support for Options for the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool



Option 1: Keep the Outdoor Pool at its current location and maintain the current service level while addressing identified issues with the facility.

Option 3: Keep the Outdoor Pool at its current location but undertake a significant renovation to increase the service level and improve accessibility.

Option 5: Close the Outdoor Pool and do not invest in a replacement public outdoor pool.

Option 2: Close the Outdoor Pool and develop a new outdoor pool co-located at the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre site.

Option 4: Close the Outdoor Pool and develop a new outdoor pool at another location in Courtenay.

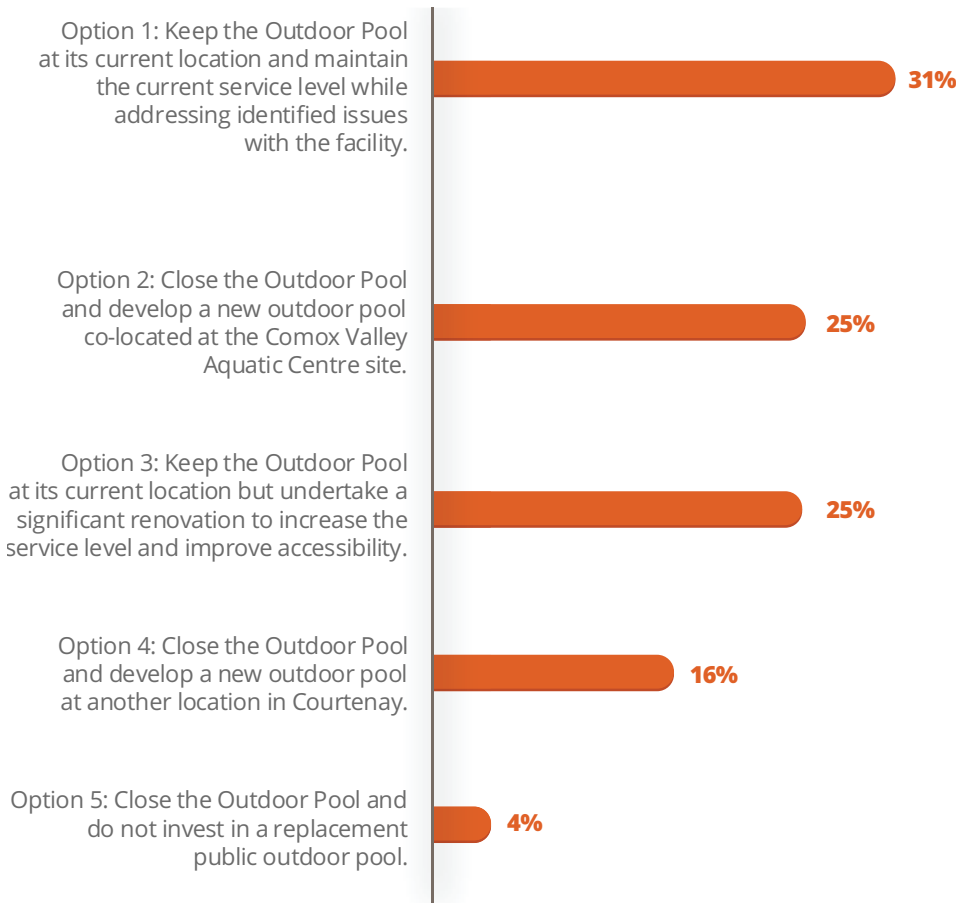
Subsegment Analysis

- Respondents from Comox are more likely to support Option 2 (56%) – relocate the outdoor pool at the Aquatic Centre – than respondents from CVRD (41%), Courtenay (40%), and Cumberland (27%).
- Respondents from Cumberland are more likely to support Option 4 (57%) – develop a new outdoor pool at another location in Courtenay – than respondents from CVRD (40%), Comox (39%), and Courtenay (37%).
- Respondents 70 yrs and older are less likely to support Option 2 – redevelop the outdoor pool at the Aquatic Centre – (28%) than respondents 39 yrs and younger (48%).
- Respondents who had visited the outdoor pool in 2022 or 2023 are more likely to support the following options compared to respondents who had not visited the outdoor pool in 2022 or 2023:
 - » Option 1 – maintain current service (66% vs 50%).
 - » Option 3 – undertake significant renovation with existing pool (48% vs 36%).

2.1.4 Most Preferred Option

Respondents were then asked to identify their most preferred option. As shown by Graph 8, Option 1 was the preferred option of the largest segment of respondents, with 31% of respondents expressing preference for keeping the pool at its current location and maintaining the current service level. One-quarter of respondents (25%) expressed preference for Option 2 (Close the pool and develop a new outdoor pool co-located at the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre) and Option 3 (Keep the pool at its current location and undergo renovations). Option 5 (Close the pool and do not reinvest in a new one) was the least supported option with just 4% of respondents selecting this as their most preferred option. Approximately half (56%) of respondents favoured an option that had the pool remaining at its current location: Option 1 (31%) and Option 3 (25%).

Graph 8: Most Preferred Option for the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool



Subsegment Analysis

- Option 1 - keep the pool at its current location and maintain its current service level – was most strongly supported by older aged residents. Approximately one-third (38%) of respondents 70 yrs and older and respondents 60-69 yrs identified this as their favourite option compared to 26% of respondents 39 yrs and younger.

Respondents had the option to provide further feedback to explain the rationale for their preferred option. (A total of 884 comments were provided.) Key concerns about the current location include the need for more parking and accessibility improvements. However, it is important to note that many people have nostalgic attachments to the pool's current location and appreciate its central location in the community and therefore, suggest investing in upgrades and renovations to improve accessibility and modernize the facility. Within the feedback it was noted that building a new pool outside of the floodplain and closer to areas with growing populations should be a key consideration to inform future investments in outdoor aquatics. Overall, the outdoor pool is valued as a community facility, but improvements (and a potentially new facility) are recognized as needed to better serve the growing population and enhance accessibility to outdoor aquatics.

Key themes that emerged from the analysis of all responses includes the following:

- Highly valued community asset that is family friendly (22%).
- The current location is centrally located (18%).
- Ensuring recreation facilities and amenities are easily accessible throughout the Valley / Region (16%).
- Concerns over the amount of investment required (15%).
- Concerns with the facility being located on a flood plain (13%).
- Lack of available parking and connection to public transit is a concern (11%).



Rationale for Preferring Option 1 - maintain current service (n=410)

- Preferred location for the outdoor pool (36%)
- Most cost-efficient option (34%)
- Valued, historical community asset (27%)

Examples of Direct Quotes

- "Keeping the existing outdoor pool is the lowest cost option that maintains public outdoor swimming pool. While I would love to see a more inclusive and modern facility in Lewis Park I feel there are too many variables and potential challenges with this location."
- "It's a summertime classic! Lovely pool, great central location. Accessible for summer camps."
- "I think up keep, maintenance and repairs of the current facilities makes the most sense logically and financially."

Rationale for Preferring Option 2 - new outdoor pool at Aquatic Centre (n=342)

- Central location that provides more space (33%)
- Improved parking and public transit access / service (27%)
- Not located in flood plain (25%)
- Cost effective approach (15%)

Examples of Direct Quotes

- "Due to the wider space over by the aquatic center, I feel there will be less crowding and more accessibility especially for those with wheelchairs. I also feel like the change rooms at the current location cannot be altered to make room for a possible gender neutral change room because of how tight the space is already, inside and outside"
- "The traffic is so heavy in its current location. We have small children and parking and accessibility is currently an issue. Putting an outdoor pool next to the indoor pool would be a better location."
- "Lowest cost of the new pool options, close to home, more parking, easier to get in and out of that parking lot. Maybe a combo option of upgrading aquatic centre and an outdoor pool together."

Rationale for Preferring Option 3 - significant renovation on current pool (n=341)

- Preferred location due to nostalgia, vistas, central location, and walkability (82%)
- Valued community asset (25%)
- Need for renovations to current pool (19%)
- Wanting to maintain current summer programming and camps (15%)

**Note: location was primarily mentioned to explain this preference however that theme was coupled with other factors.*

Examples of Direct Quotes

- "The location is central but the pool could definitely use a renovation. New features for kids would be great."
- "A new facility would make coming to the pool much more enjoyable. Having nice change rooms, lockers, and nice pool deck would make my swimming experience awesome."
- "The outdoor pool in Courtenay means a lot to the community, it's a summertime staple. My grandparents swam there in the 50s, my father learned to swim there in the 60s, I learned to swim there in the 90s and now my children take summer swim lessons at the outdoor pool. Wouldn't it be wonderful to offer it to the next generation? It does however require significant modernization. A family change room is needed and accessible features so that all community members can enjoy the outdoor pool."

Rationale for Preferring Option 4 - develop new outdoor pool at another location (n=239)

- Improve geographic balance of recreation opportunities (35%)
- Develop a larger pool (25%)
- Ability to improve and expanding parking (22%)
- Not located in flood plain (13%)

Examples of Direct Quotes

- "The outdoor pool is nice, but most of the time I swim in the river instead. It's doesn't add value to build a pool next to the river. A pool located away from the river would provide swim opportunities in areas where there are none."
- "Currently the outdoor pool and both indoor pools are on the east side of the bridge. It would be great to see an outdoor pool on the west side."
- "The current location does not have favorable parking options and is on the east side of the bridge. It would be lovely to have a facility located on the west side of the Valley given its substantial growth over the years"

Rationale for Preferring Option 5 - close and do not replace the outdoor pool (n=52)

- Ability of residents to use outdoor water access to swim (40%)
- Concerns over cost (25%)
- Cost concerns / other community needs that should be addressed (25%)

Examples of Direct Quotes

- "Building another indoor pool would be a better investment as it can be used year round, there are many lakes, rivers and oceans nearby for outdoor swimming."
- "We are surrounded by water. People should go to a beach. The costs will balloon they always do. Don't waste our money. If you decide to go ahead with a renovation or rebuild plan it should be privately funded not taxpayer funded. I opt out."
- "The costs are too high to invest in this type of recreation. Our community has other options"

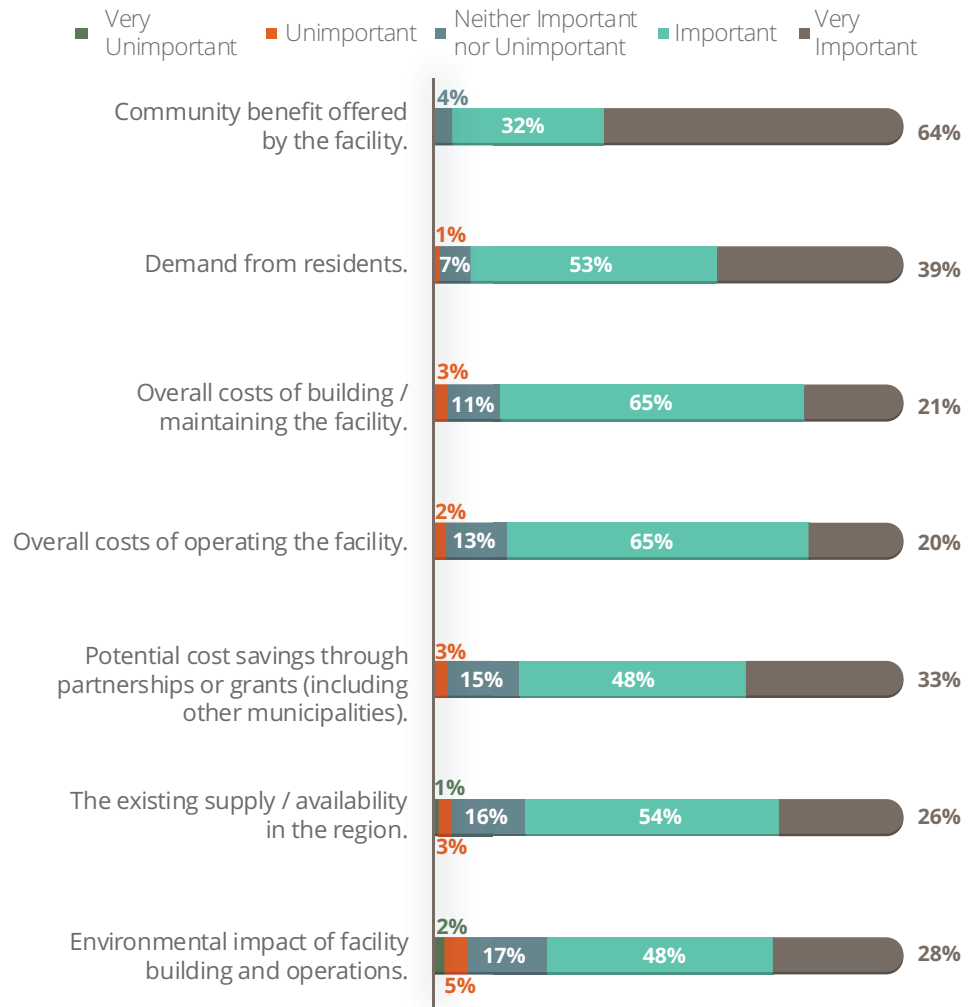


2.1.5 Decision Making Criteria

Due to resource limitations, some recreation and parks facilities and amenities, including outdoor pools, must be prioritized over others. Respondents were provided with a list of factors that the City could use to prioritize investment in one facility or amenity over another. For each factor they were asked to identify how important it should be when the City prioritizes one facility or amenity project over another.

As shown by Graph 9, all criteria were deemed as important to some degree by respondents. When examined by ratings of “very important”, approximately two-thirds of respondents (64%) identified “community benefit offered by the facility” as a very important criterion. Next, demand from residents was considered “very important” by approximately one-third of respondents (39%). One-fifth of respondents (21%) said operating cost is a very important criterion. Refer to Graph 9 for additional details.

Graph 9: Prioritization Criteria



Respondents were able to identify other factors that should be considered when prioritizing facilities or amenities. There were 300 comments provided. Common factors included:

- Cost efficiency.
- Accessibility for elderly as well as youth.
- Geographic balance of facilities in community.
- Seasonality of outdoor pools verses indoor pools that can be used year-round.
- Lane capacity to accommodate a range of user groups.
- Heritage value of the outdoor pool.
- Input and feedback from the community.
- Projected community and population growth.
- Co-location of community facilities and amenities.

“With the aging population it’s important to realize that going swimming in any of the local beaches is NOT a reality for many. As well, NIC college students may not own transportation so summer swimming always relies on public transit that may not fit tide times. I also feel that the pool being relocated to be adjacent to the wave pool will relieve traffic congestion and potential traffic accidents.”

(Survey respondent)



2.1.6 Other Comments

Finally, respondents could provide any other comments about the provision of outdoor aquatics in the City of Courtenay. There were 282 comments provided.

Within the concluding comments, a general theme was that the outdoor pool should be preserved and improved, with suggestions for upgrading change rooms and accommodating a family change room, adding water slides and wading areas, and increasing accessibility. There is also a need for improved parking, as well as enhanced program offerings and expanded swim lesson options. Additionally, some respondents did suggest alternative options to the current facility, such as using the river or connecting a new pool to other facilities. Overall, the community values the pool as a gathering place for families and friends and recognizes its importance in creating community bonds and providing a unique summer experience.

Examples of Direct Quotes

- “Wonderful facility. Well used. Lots of fun programs. Highlight of summer fun.”
- “I hope the current site of the outdoor pool can be transformed into something else that fills some of the needs the pool fills now. Public outdoor recreation, a place to cool off, a safer alternative to river swimming. I would love to see more park space in that location, an additional splash pad with increased accessibility including for adults!”
- “The outdoor pool is a very unique facility in the Comox Valley, and it provides a summer experience that the indoor pools can’t provide.”
- “The outdoor pool is a critical part of summertime culture in the valley, this is an incredible chance to shape the next 100 years of summer aquatics in Courtenay!”
- “I would really appreciate having more options for aquafit through the day and evenings at the outdoor pool, increased accessibility for people with disabilities, and more swim times that are adult only. I also find that many of the programs in this town are during the day which doesn’t work for people who work 9-5 jobs so more aquafit classes and adult only swim times outside of regular working hours would be greatly appreciated.”



2.1.7 About You

Respondents were asked several questions about them. The responses are presented in the following table.

Where do you live?			Household with Children		
	Survey Respondents	2021 Census*		Survey Respondents	2021 Census*
City of Courtenay	54%	39%	Yes	62%	44%
Comox Valley Regional District	20%	34%	No	35%	56%
Town of Comox	16%	21%	Prefer not to say	3%	
Village of Cumberland	7%	6%	Ages of Children in the Home		
K'ómoks First Nation	<1%	N/A		Survey Respondents	2021 Census*
Other	3%	-	0-4 years	31%	-
Where in the Comox Valley Regional District?			5-9 years	53%	-
	Survey Respondents	2021 Census*	10-14 years	40%	-
Electoral Area A	21%	32%	15-19 years	21%	-
Electoral Area B	40%	30%	20 years or older	7%	-
Electoral Area C	39%	37%	Prefer not to say	2%	-
How long have you resided in the Comox Valley?					
	Survey Respondents	2021 Census*			
Less than 2 years	7%	-			
2-5 years	12%	-			
Longer than 5 years	80%	-			
Prefer not to say	2%	-			
Age of Respondents					
	Survey Respondents	2021 Census*			
19 years of age and younger	1%	-			
20-39 years	32%	24%			
40-59 years	45%	31%			
60-69 years	16%	21%			
70-79 years	5%	16%			
80 years and older	1%	8%			
Prefer not to say	1%	-			

*Information is not available

3



CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool is a **highly valued community facility** with approximately two-thirds of respondents having visited the Outdoor Pool in the last two years. While visitation is greater amongst younger respondents, particularly those with younger children, **all ages of respondents do use the Outdoor Pool.**

Approximately three-quarters of respondents strongly agree that **an outdoor pool is an important community facility** to have in the Comox Valley Region and the City of Courtenay. Those respondents who did not visit the Outdoor Pool in either 2023 or 2022 agreed about the importance of the pool in the community, in Courtenay, and the Comox Valley.

The outdoor pool is commonly used to experience fun and enjoyment, to socialize and meet new people, and to exercise and look after physical health. Common reasons why people do not make use of the outdoor pool include issues with crowding, parking, the condition and cleanliness, and a preference for ocean / lake / river swimming.

When considering options for the future of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool, **Option 1 – keep the pool at its current location and maintain current service level – received the greatest amount of support and the least amount of opposition.** Option 5 – close the outdoor pool and do not invest in a replacement pool – was the least supported option by respondents and the most opposed. Although there was strong consensus about the value of an outdoor pool to the community, opinions differed on where the pool should be located. Over half (56%) preferred an option that kept the Outdoor Pool on its current site while 41% supported the development of a new pool at another site.

When considering decision making criteria, community benefit is clearly seen as the most important one. Responding to community demand is a second criteria strongly supported. While important, cost is considered a less critical decision-making criteria.



4

APPENDICES



Appendix A: Questionnaire

City of Courtenay

OUTDOOR POOL SURVEY

Introduction

Project Background:

Earlier this year, the City of Courtenay and the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) completed an Aquatic Needs Strategy which provided direction for the future of aquatic services in the region. The draft strategy can be found here. The City of Courtenay is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool at Lewis Park. The Comox Valley Regional District operates and maintains the Comox Valley Sports and Aquatic Centres.

Fast facts about the Courtenay Outdoor Pool:

- Built in 1949 as memorial pool to honour veterans and their service.
- Nearing end of facility life, according to a 2015 condition assessment, it requires approximately \$1 million capital investment over the next ten years to remain operational. The remediation of a leak issue will likely result in additional capital costs.
- It does not meet current physical accessibility requirements.
- It is located in a flood plain.
- Community engagement found that the facility is well-used and a valued community asset.

Next we're going to ask you a few questions about how you use the Courtenay Outdoor Pool and your thoughts on its future. At the end of the survey you will be able to enter into a draw to win a 10 punch drop-in pass at the City of Courtenay Lewis Centre. You have until September 12, 2023 to provide your response.

The personal information collected as part of this survey is collected under the authority of Section 26 (c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used solely for the purpose of planning the future of the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool. Should you have any questions about the collection, use and protection of your personal information, please contact the City of Courtenay Manager of Business Administration at rcs@courtenay.ca or 250-703-4859.

Utilization

1. How frequently have you visited the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool in 2023?

I have not visited in 2023.

Daily (5 or more days a week).

Weekly (1 or 2 times a week).

Monthly (1 or 2 times a month).

Occasionally (a few times)

2. How frequently did you visit the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool last year (2022)?

I did not visit in 2022.

Monthly (1 or 2 times a month).

Daily (5 or more days a week).

Occasionally (a few times)

Weekly (1 or 2 times a week).

3. What are your reasons for not using the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool? (Select all that apply.)

Not interested in outdoor pool activities.

Physical barriers to access or get into the pool.

Health / medical issues.

Lack of inclusive spaces and practices (i.e. accommodates disabilities and individual needs / considerations such as gender neutral spaces, adult change tables).

Costs to get into programs / lessons.

Admission cost to the pool (prior to the free admission pilot program that started on August 8, 2023).

Do not feel welcome.

Hours of operation.

Prefer ocean / lake / river swimming.

It doesn't have the amenities / features desired.

Condition or cleanliness of the facility.

Crowding / too busy.

Was unaware of the pool / don't know where the pool is.

Transportation challenges to get to the pool / location.

Parking.

Location is not convenient.

Other - Write In: _____

4. What is your main reason for visiting the outdoor pool? (Select all that apply.)

Exercise and / or physical health.

Meet new people.

Fun / enjoyment.

Improve skills.

Restoring mental well being / relaxing.

Learn new things.

Therapy and / or rehabilitation.

Other - Write In: _____

Socializing with family and friends.

Value

5. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unsure
The Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool is an important part of my summer recreation experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool is an important community facility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is important for the Comox Valley region to have a public outdoor pool.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is important for the City of Courtenay to have a public outdoor pool.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Are there times in which you would choose to use the Courtenay & District Outdoor Pool instead of one of the region's indoor pools?

No, I prefer to swim indoors.

Yes.

Unsure.

7. Why would you use the Outdoor Pool instead of one of the indoor pools in the region? (Select all that apply.)

I prefer to swim outdoors.

The outdoor pool is closer to where I live.

The outdoor pool has more convenient times.

The outdoor pool is located beside other amenities that I like.

I like to swim or play in water outdoors because it is more social.

The outdoor pool provides a nice / unique summer time activity.

The outdoor pool offers respite from the summer heat.

Other - Write In: _____

Options

8. The Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool is 74 years old and is nearing the end of its useful life. It requires substantial investment to continue to offer outdoor aquatic opportunities. There are several options as it relates to the future of the outdoor pool in Courtenay. Please consider each of the following options and indicate the extent to which you support each option. (Note: you can support more than one option; in the next section you will be asked to identify your preferred option.)

Note: the costs identified below are estimates taken from the Aquatic Needs Strategy 2023.

	Strongly Support	Support	Neither Support nor Oppose	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Option 1: Keep the Outdoor Pool at its current location and maintain the current service level while addressing identified issues with the facility. (Estimated cost at least \$1.0 million plus additional costs to remediate a leak issue.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 2: Close the Outdoor Pool and develop a new outdoor pool co-located at the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre site. (Estimated cost \$12.0 million, does not include cost of decommissioning outdoor pool.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 3: Keep the Outdoor Pool at its current location but undertake a significant renovation to increase the service level and improve accessibility. Note that this option requires significant flood plain concerns to be addressed and feasibility is to be determined. (Estimated cost \$18.2 million including cost of decommissioning outdoor pool.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 4: Close the Outdoor Pool and develop a new outdoor pool at another location in Courtenay. Note: no site is currently identified. (Estimated cost is \$16.6 million, not including purchase of additional land.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 5: Close the Outdoor Pool and do not invest in a replacement public outdoor pool. (Estimated cost is \$1.0 million for decommissioning outdoor pool, pending further study to confirm cost.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Most Preferred Option

9. Considering the five (5) options, please select the option you favour most.

- Option 1: Keep the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool at its current location and maintain the current service level while addressing identified issues with the facility.
- Option 2: Close the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool and develop a new outdoor pool co-located at the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre.
- Option 3: Keep the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool at its current location but undertake a significant renovation to increase service level and improve accessibility. Note that this option requires significant flood plain concerns to be addressed and feasibility is to be determined.
- Option 4: Close the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool and develop a new outdoor pool at another location in the City of Courtenay. Note that no site is currently identified.
- Option 5: Close the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool and do not invest in a replacement public outdoor pool.

a. Please explain your reason for selecting the one option.

Decision-Making Criteria

10. Due to resource limitations, some recreation and parks facilities and amenities, including outdoor pools, have to be prioritized over others. Please indicate how important each factor should be when the City prioritizes one facility or amenity over another.

	Very Important	Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Demand from residents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall costs of operating the facility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall costs of building / maintaining the facility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental impact of facility building and operations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The existing supply / availability in the region.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Potential cost savings through partnerships or grants (including other municipalities).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community benefit offered by the facility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

a. Are there any other factors the City should consider when prioritizing facilities or amenities?

Other Comments

11. Do you have any other comments about the provision of outdoor aquatics in the City of Courtenay?

About You

12. Where do you live?

City of Courtenay

Comox Valley Regional District

Town of Comox

Village of Cumberland

K'ómoks First Nation

Other - Write In: _____

a. Where in the Comox Valley Regional District?

Electoral Area A

Electoral Area B

Electoral Area C

13. What best describes your age?

19 years of age and younger.

20-39 years.

40-59 years.

60-69 years.

70-79 years.

80 years and older.

Prefer not to say.

14. Do you have children living in your home?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say.

a. What best describes your age?

0-4 years.

5-9 years.

10-14 years.

15-19 years.

20 years or older.

Prefer not to say.

15. How long have you resided in the Comox Valley?

Less than 2 years.

2-5 years.

Longer than 5 years.

Prefer not to say.

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer our questions. The information you have provided is important and, along with all other responses, will be considered by the City as it determines the future for the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool.

Thank You!

Thank you for taking our survey. Your response is very important to us.

Draw Entry Form

Thank you for taking the time and participating in our survey, we appreciate it!

If you would like to be entered into a draw to win a 10 punch drop-in pass at the City of Courtenay Lewis Centre, please provide the information below. Please note that the information you provide will only be used to conduct the draw and notify the winner. Additionally, your name is not connected to the answers that you provided.

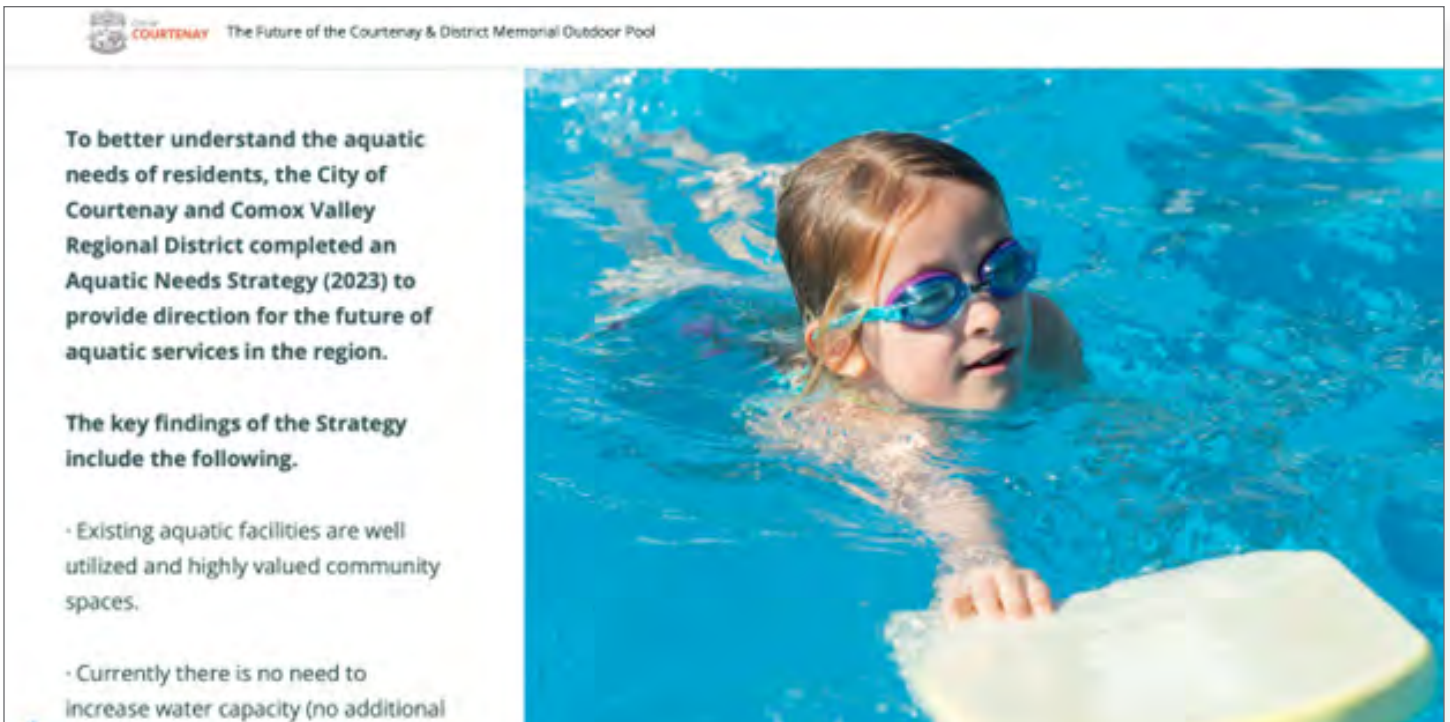
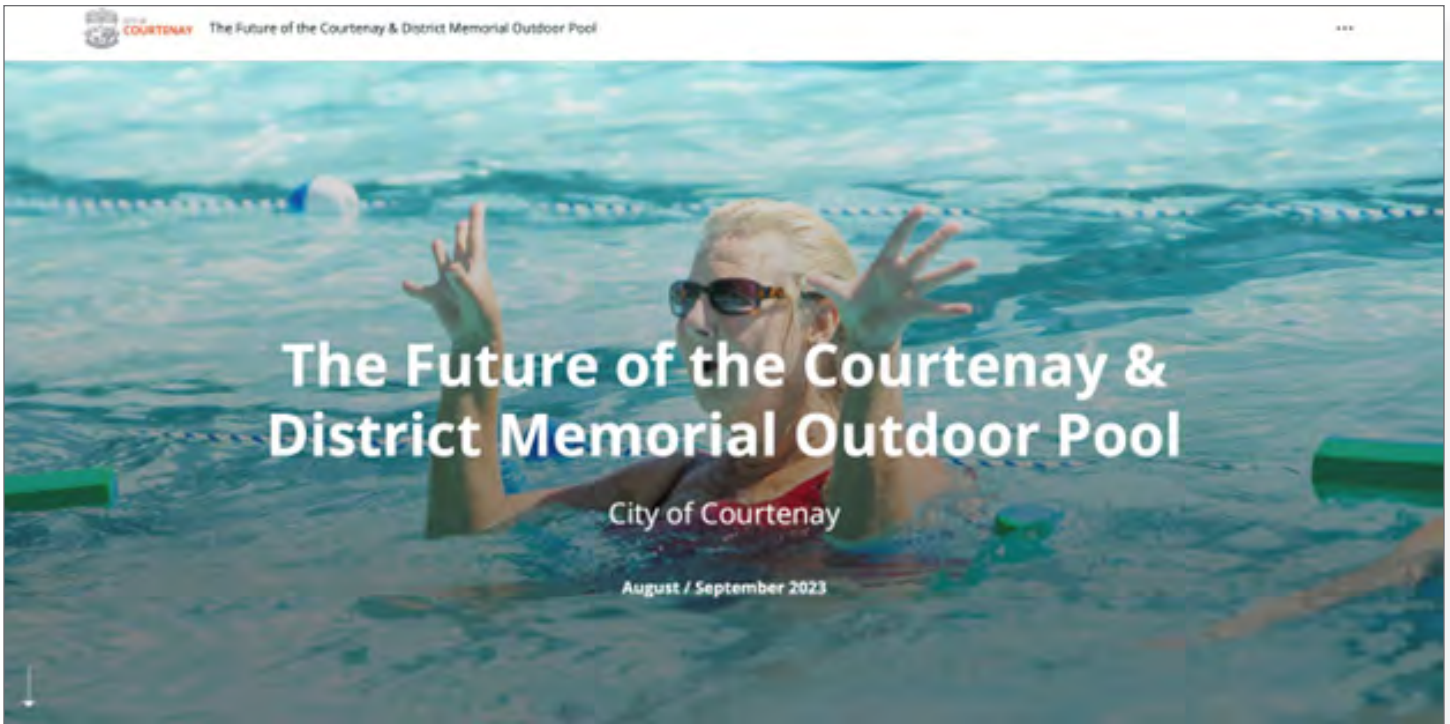
Name (First Name Only): _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

The personal information collected as part of this survey is collected under the authority of Section 26 (c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used solely for the purpose of planning the future of the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool. Should you have any questions about the collection, use and protection of your personal information, please contact the City of Courtenay Manager of Business Administration at rcs@courtenay.ca or 250-703-4859.

Appendix B: ArcGIS StoryMap





The Aquatic Needs Strategy contains three strategic objectives to guide the Comox Valley Regional District and City of Courtenay in the delivery of aquatic services.

1. High quality aquatic facilities that are adaptable and responsive to community need.
2. Provide accessible, affordable and inclusive facilities and services.
3. Facilities and services are well planned, maintained and managed.



The Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool is 74 years old and requires substantial investment to continue to offer outdoor aquatic opportunities. There are several options as it relates to the future of the outdoor pool and the City of Courtenay wants to hear from residents and users to help plan for its future.

- Built in 1949 as memorial pool to honour veterans and their service.
- Nearing end of facility life, according to a 2015 condition assessment, it requires approximately \$1 million in capital investment over the next ten years to remain operational. The remediation of a leak issue will likely result in additional capital costs.

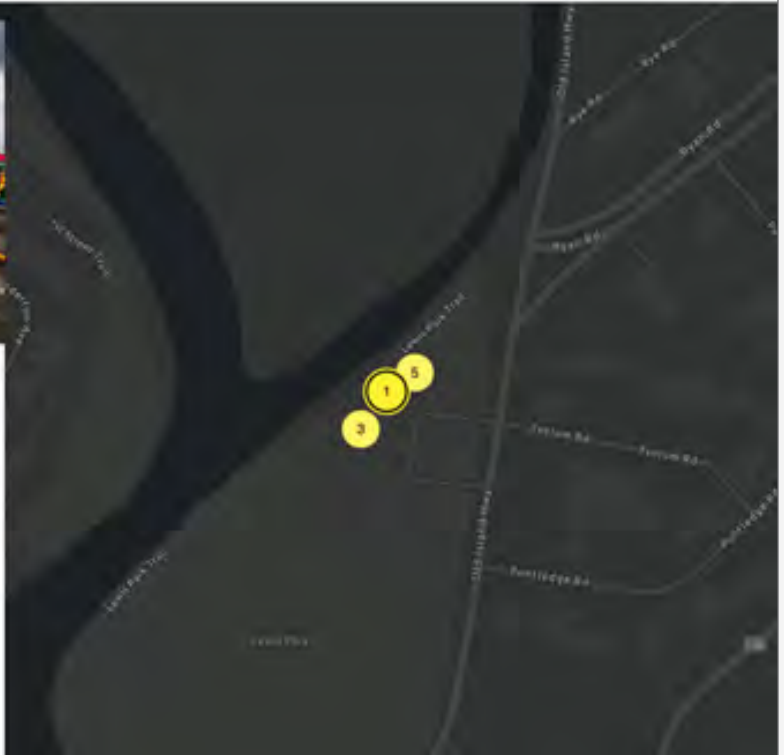




Option 1: Status Quo

- Estimated Cost \$1.0 million plus additional costs to remediate a leak issue.
- Maintain outdoor pool in current location and configuration while addressing required facility maintenance.

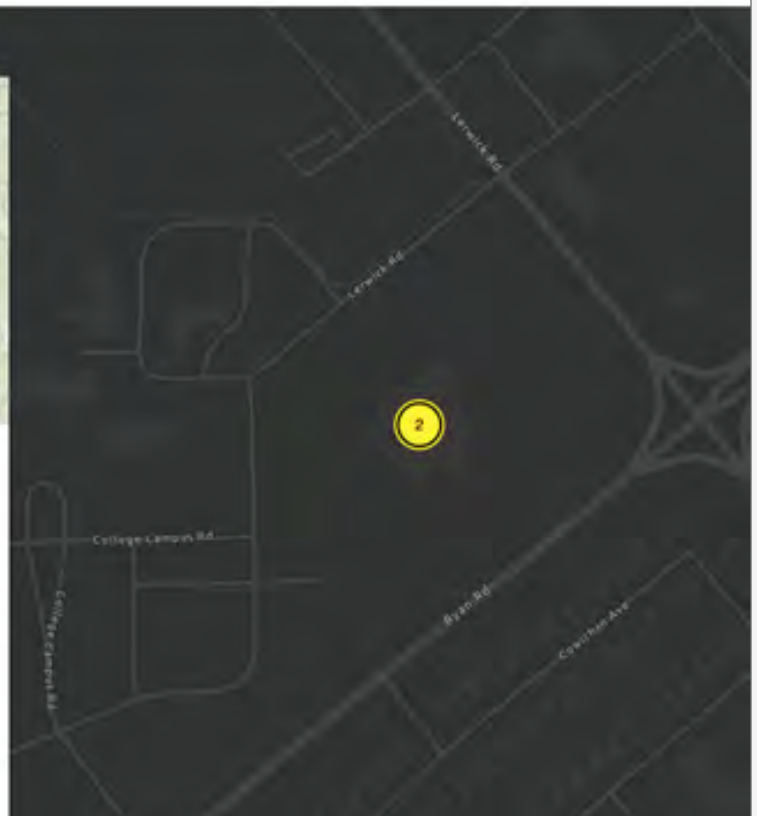
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Option 2: New Outdoor Pool co-located at Comox Valley Aquatic Centre

- Estimated Cost: \$12 million.
- Enhanced accessibility features.

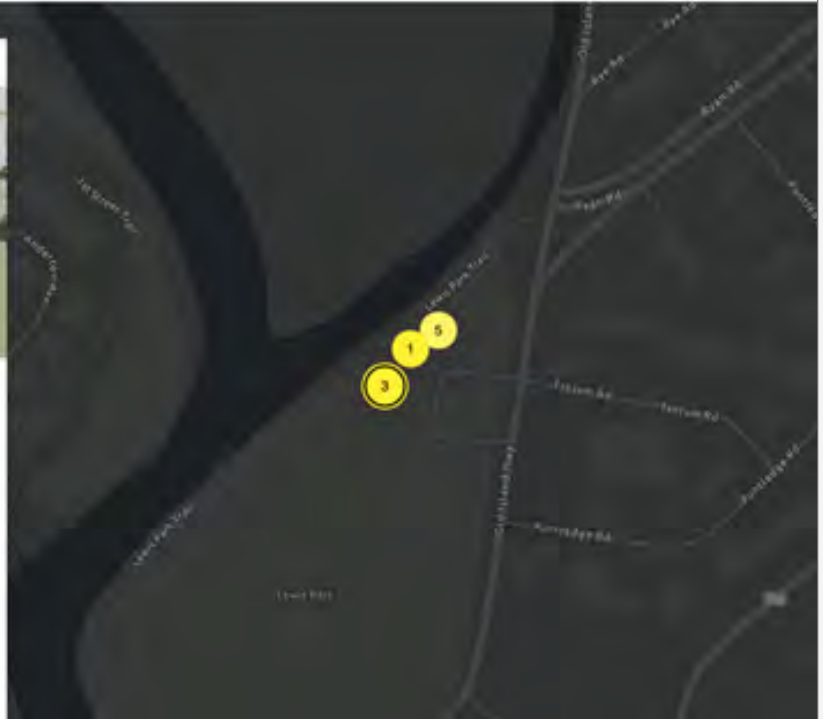
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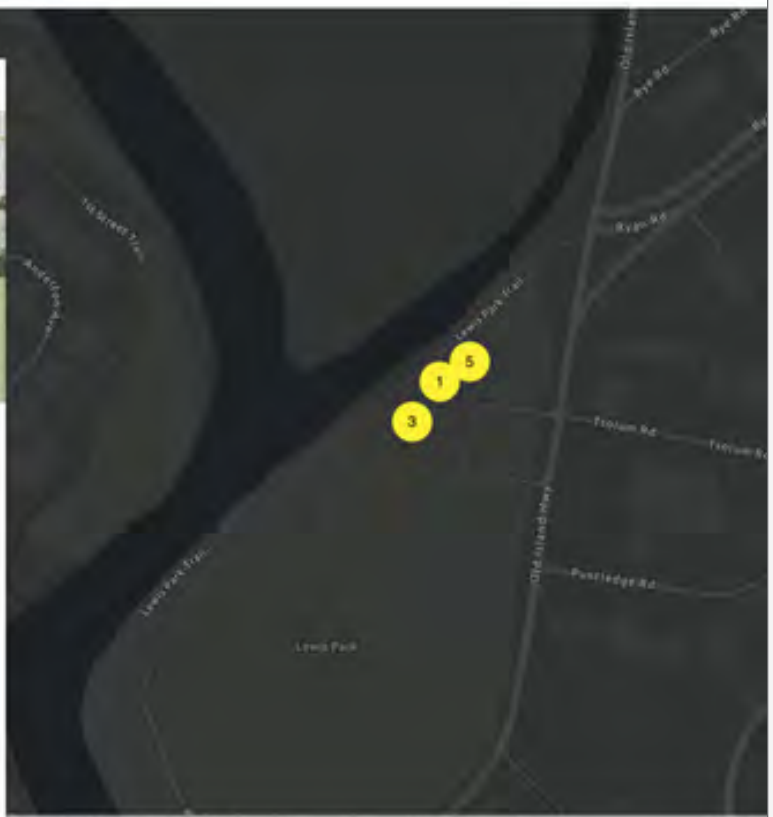
Option 3: New Outdoor Pool at Existing Site

- Estimated Cost: \$18.2 million.
- Feasibility of redevelopment in flood plain is to be determined through further study.



Option 4: New Outdoor Pool at New Site

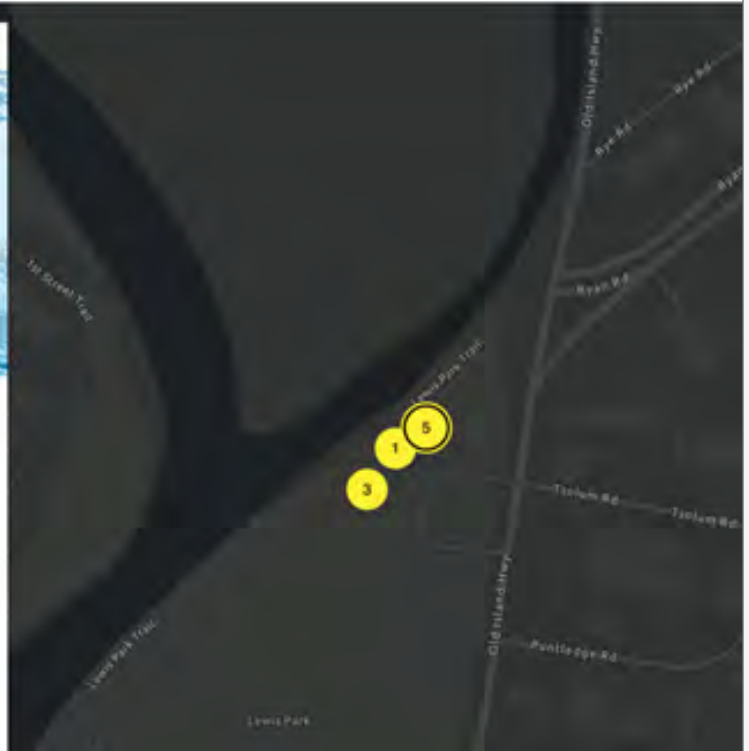
- Estimated Cost: \$16.6 million.
- Improved quality of outdoor aquatics.
- Enhanced focus on leisure and wellness.





Option 5: Closure of Outdoor Pool

- Estimated cost: \$1 million for decommissioning (pending further study to confirm cost).
- Permanent closure of outdoor pool

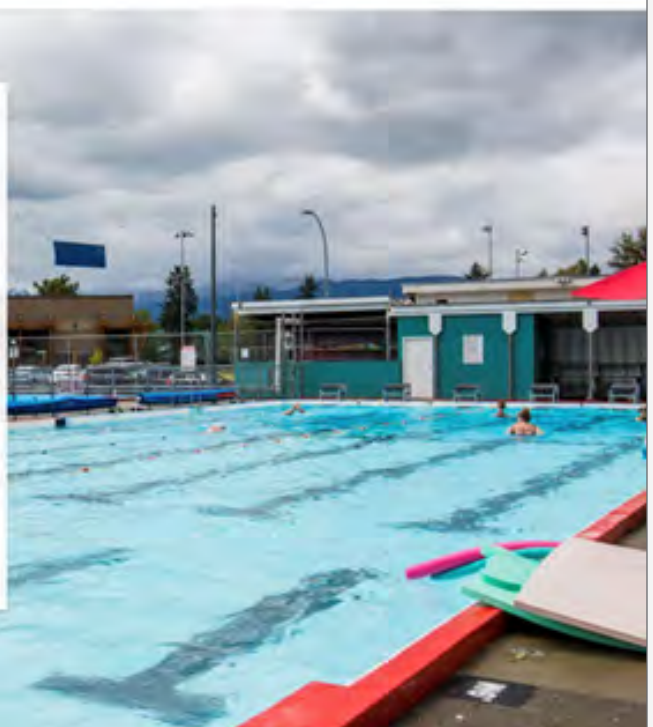


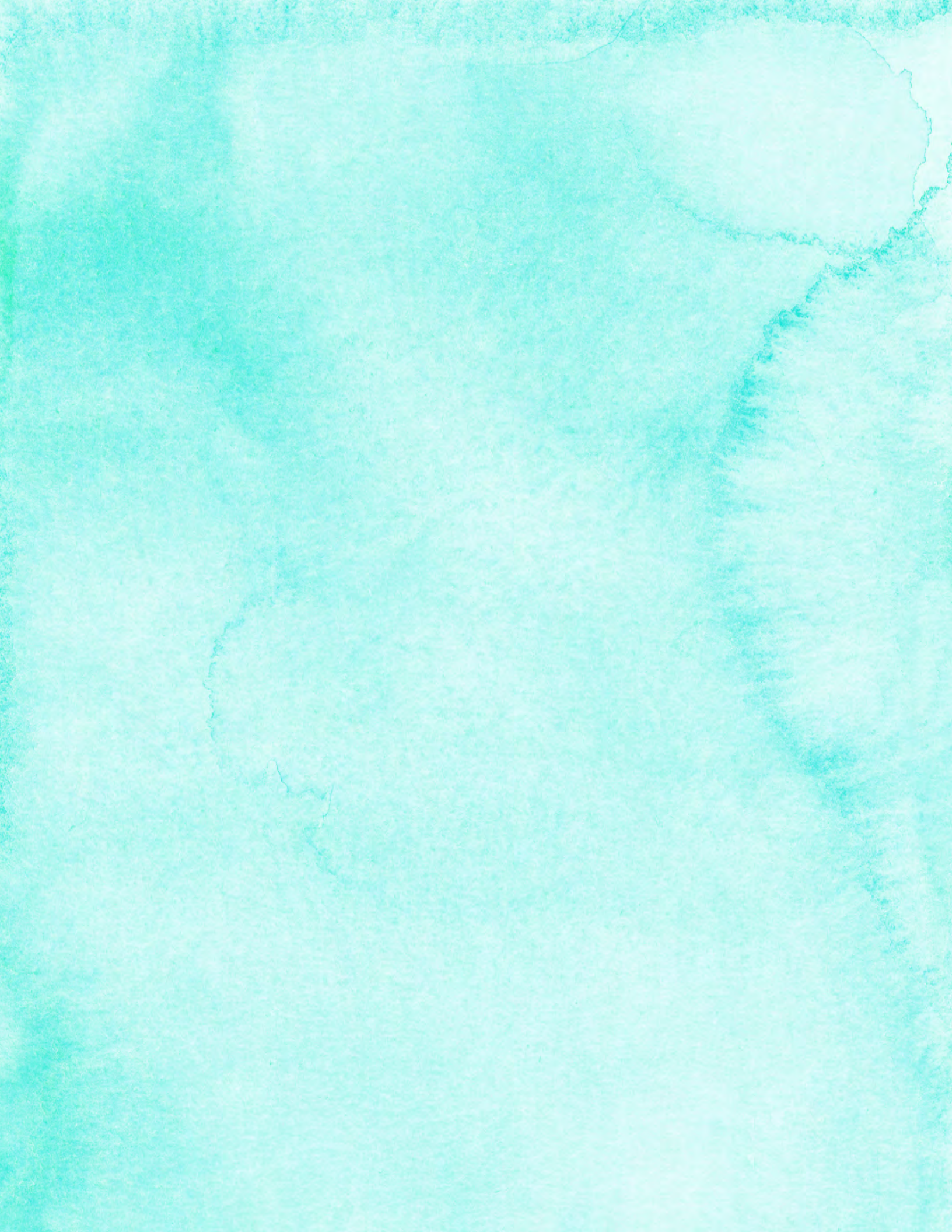
We Want to Hear from You!

The City of Courtenay would like your opinion on the future of the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool.

Please complete a short survey to provide your feedback by **September 12, 2023**.

[Participate in the Survey](#)









The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council

File No.: 5335-20

From: Director of Engineering Services

Date: January 24, 2024

Subject: Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool - Condition Assessments and Options Analysis

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide council with an update on the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool condition assessments and request direction for staff to commence with all operationally necessary repairs to the pool for the 2024 season as well as begin procurement for an Options Analysis for the future of the pool in its current location.

BACKGROUND:

The Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool is one of the oldest pools of its kind in British Columbia and has played a significant role in the community since July 1st, 1949. The original 25 meter pool is made of cast-in-place walls and slabs. The pool has had several upgrades throughout the years including the addition of the wading pool in 1959 and change rooms and multipurpose area in 1979.

Owned, maintained, and operated by the City, the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool is turning 75 years old this year. It is nearing the end of its useful life and requires capital investment in the form of repair, renovation, or redevelopment in order to continue operating and serving the Comox Valley into the future.

In partnership with the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) an Aquatic Needs Strategy was completed in 2023 to provide a 25-year vision and ten (10) year implementation plan for the future of indoor and outdoor aquatics in the Comox Valley. The Aquatic Needs Strategy identified the outdoor pool as an important community asset that should be maintained both from an aquatic services and community amenity perspective.

Based on the findings and recommendations of the Aquatic Strategy, the City undertook a public engagement to assess the public's response to the facility options put forward for the future of the outdoor pool by the Aquatic Needs Strategy. As per the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool *What We Heard Report*, results demonstrated that the preferred option is to maintain the Outdoor Pool at its current location and maintain the current service level while addressing identified issues with the facility, with the next most supported option being a significant renewal of the outdoor pool at its current location. Only 4% of respondents indicated their preferred option was the permanent closure of the outdoor pool.

Both the Aquatic Needs Strategy and the Outdoor Pool public engagement have clearly and consistently demonstrated that the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool is a valued community asset, even by those residents who do not use its programs and services. It is clear from the public's response that

there is strong support for outdoor aquatic services in Courtenay and the Comox Valley, and strong support for the continued provision of an outdoor pool, with the preference being to maintain it at its current location either through repair, renovation, or construction of a new pool.

DISCUSSION:

Based on the age and condition of the facility, initial facility condition assessments were completed for the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool beginning in 2014 to identify immediate, short, medium, and long term capital investments required for the continued operation of the outdoor pool.

Since 2017, the following capital work has been completed:

- New boiler and boiler room (2017)
- Change Room Interior walls and flooring (2018)
- Chemical storage and safety improvements
- Safety items (main drain)
- Annual maintenance (basic maintenance, deck crack repairs, and painting)
- Recirculation Pump Replacement (2023)

While initial immediate (regulatory) and some short term capital upgrades were completed, all medium and long term recommendations were delayed until such time as the Aquatic Needs Strategy and Outdoor Pool public engagement were complete. The rationale being that the future of the outdoor pool, including future capital investments would be guided by a sound Aquatic Needs Strategy. Therefore, through effective repairs and mitigation measures, the outdoor pool has remained in operation since 2018, except for the 2020 COVID-19 related closure.

Leading up to the 2023 pool season however, it was identified through further facility condition assessments, that additional repairs and improvements were required as a result of the ageing facility and systems. In addition, a water loss analysis was completed to identify the source(s) of water loss which staff had identified over and above typical water loss due to usage and evaporation; this work resulted in a delay in the opening of the pool for the 2023 operating season. Environmental and Public Health regulators were advised of the leakage, with a commitment to report back on outcomes and findings. As a result, the regulator has requested that the City develop a remediation plan to address the leaks and report back within one to two years.

The 2023 operating season saw several other unplanned or temporary closures of the pool due to equipment breakdowns or operational failures, including the requirement to replace a failed recirculation pump. Due to the age of the pool and its infrastructure, unplanned repairs and subsequent service disruptions will continue to emerge in the coming years until such time as an investment is made into the renewal of ageing assets and associated appurtenances or the pool is upgraded or redeveloped.

Condition Assessment

Throughout the second half of 2023, a series of condition assessments was completed to determine the current condition of the pool and its systems (mechanical, structural, and electrical), and in order to prioritize any immediate operational repairs and any significant repairs that may be required in the near future.

As a result of the age of the outdoor pool, it is also imperative that work be completed to assess the pool's systems and update required documentation as set out by the Province in its pool design guidelines. It's expected that this investigation will form the basis of any urgent work in 2024.

While the condition assessments outline a number of immediate, short, medium, and long term recommended facility repairs, many of the identified items are typical of a facility of this age, especially a facility that is subject to the outdoor elements year-round, including freeze/thaw cycles, and a high groundwater table.

Mechanical – Main Pool

The mechanical condition assessment was undertaken by two separate firms throughout 2023. Belzona Molecular provided leak investigation services as well as testing of the pool's recirculation systems. AME Group reviewed and assessed the pools mechanical systems such as water supply piping, pumps, and drainage piping among other systems.

Through leak detection assessments and inspections, it was identified that the main pool is losing a significant volume in any one given day. Over the operating season the pool is experiencing an approximate loss or unexplained loss of twenty-two (22%) percent per day. Through a series of leak detection tests, water loss was observed at pool basin cracks and expansion joints, as well as within the pressurized recirculation piping. A leak that was discovered at the main drain valve was repaired through the full replacement of the valve assembly.

AME completed a health code review in relation to the pool's mechanical system. The assessment suggested that the City explore a list of upgrades as a priority to enhance the safety features of the pool. These include reviewing the pool and wading pools' single main drains, anti-entrapment systems, and chemical storage practices.

Mechanical - Wading Pool

During a water usage audit and site review, it was observed that the wading pool was losing a significant amount of water each day through a concrete drain sump that has been compromised and requires repair. Additional work is required to confirm the wading pool is meeting its turnover rates as required by the BC Pool Design Guidelines.

Structural

Thurber Engineering completed a review of the outdoor pool's concrete structure and coating. Thurber's findings include delamination of concrete, degradation of the joint filler material, significant pool paint coating build up, and blistering of the coating and interlaminar debondment of the coating system. Addressing these items would also address some of the findings of the water loss assessment.

Electrical

The electrical equipment within the facilities are operational and have been maintained throughout the operating life. It is not known but assumed that many of the electrical systems currently in place do not meet current electrical code which is typical of a building of this age. Electrical consultants who carried out the condition assessment indicated that the system would likely not be required to be brought up to current code as long as it is being maintained.

Options

The Comox Valley Aquatic Needs Strategy and Courtenay and Outdoor Memorial Pool What We Heard Report outlined five (5) options for the future of the outdoor pool facility, summarized in Table 1: Outdoor Pool Facility Options. Further detail is available in the Aquatic Needs Strategy and the outdoor pool What We Heard Report.

Table 1: Outdoor Pool Facility Options

Outdoor Pool Facility Option	Location	Capital Budget Estimate
Option 1: Status Quo	At existing site: Lewis Park	\$1 Million plus cost for repair and leak remediation (TBD)
Option 2: New outdoor pool at existing indoor aquatic facility site.	Co-located at the CV Aquatic Centre	\$12 Million
Option 3: New outdoor pool	At existing site: Lewis Park	\$18.2 million for replacement
Option 4: New outdoor pool at new site	To be determined	\$16.6 million (does not include land cost)
Option 5: Closure of outdoor pool without replacement or relocation	N/A	\$1 million for decommissioning (pending further study to confirm cost).

As per the Courtenay and Outdoor Memorial Pool What We Heard Report, the public preference is for the pool to be maintained at its current location, either through repair or redevelopment. Preferences for the relocation of the pool to another location (Comox Valley Aquatic Centre or alternative unidentified location) were generally even split, and only four percent (4%) supported the permanent closure of the pool.

Consideration of Options for relocation or permanent closure

Based on the Aquatic Needs Strategy which identifies the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool as a valued community asset, in addition to feedback highlighting its central location, social impact, and significant usage, staff are recommending that Council approve proceeding with an option analysis for the future of the pool at its current location.

The public has clearly indicated that it does not support the permanent closure of the outdoor pool; with the Comox Valley Aquatics Strategy also recommending its continued operation. The public has indicated its support for continued investment in the pool either in the form of repair, redevelopment, or relocation.

While approximately 25% of respondents to the outdoor pool public engagement indicate their preferred option is for the pool to be relocated to the Aquatic Centre, this is less than the 56% who support it remaining in its current location. Concerns with relocation also include comments regarding centralizing aquatic services in one area of the City and region, as well as the social value of a stand-alone outdoor pool centralised in the City. In addition, if the City was to proceed with this option, considerable capital repair and maintenance work would still be required at the Outdoor Pool if the direction was to ensure its continued operation until such time as the outdoor pool could be relocated. Based on the Comox Valley Recreation Commission strategic plan for redevelopment of the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre this would be a minimum of five to seven years. The Options Analysis will include consideration of repairs required for the ongoing operation of the pool in its current form and location, and could inform the capital repairs required for operation over the next five to seven years should Council wish to explore the option of relocation to the Aquatic Centre.

While relocation to another, unidentified location, was included in the facility options and was supported by 16% of respondents, without an identified property for relocation this is not an option that can be assessed for feasibility at this time. As for relocation to the Aquatic Centre, this option would also require capital investment in the outdoor pool until such time as a new pool is built at a new location if the direction is to maintain the outdoor pool's operation in the meantime.

Based on the above, as well as the Aquatic Needs Strategy findings and outdoor pool public engagement results, staff recommend an options analysis for the current location, however the alternative options could be included in the scope of work, with an associated increase in estimated project budget, if directed by Council.

Next Steps

Staff are recommending an initial three-year strategy for capital investment and facility planning for the outdoor pool. These recommendations have been developed based on the Aquatic Needs Strategy, findings from the outdoor pool public engagement as outlined in the What We Heard Report, and the recently updated condition assessments. The recommendations align with community preference for the outdoor pool to remain on site while also acknowledging that further options and feasibility analysis must be completed to understand the repair, capital improvement, and redevelopment implications and considerations for this location.

The proposed three year plan as outlined below addresses immediate operational repairs as well as provides decision points at the end of each phase for Council discussion and further direction as the scope is refined.

Proposed Immediate Actions – 2024

1. Begin immediate work on routine and planned maintenance required for operation (i.e. cracks, VIHA requirements, sand filter medium replacement, etc.)
2. Begin required repairs as a result of the Condition Assessments:
 - a) Continue investigations to update pool operations documentation (required)
 - b) Complete needed mechanical and safety work (scope to be confirmed)
3. Conduct Outdoor Pool Options Analysis to study the future of the memorial pool at its current location. This study will identify options and associated costs and lifecycles for 3 options:
 - a) Repairs
 - b) Renovations (Capital Upgrades)
 - c) Redevelopment (construction of a new pool)

Staff are recommending that all upgrades (estimated to cost approximately \$75,000) related to health and safety and core operational functionality commence in early 2024, to ensure the pool is operational for the 2024 summer season. Initiating this work as quickly as possible is critical as the work could impact the planned opening schedule of the pool in 2024.

Proposed Short Term Plans - 2025

If an options analysis for the current location is approved by Council, as the conclusion of the analysis, a recommendation will be presented to Council to approve the direction for the facility. Once direction is confirmed by Council, staff would initiate detailed design.

Staff will also report back to regulators to seek review and approval for the leak remediation plans.

As noted above, many of the systems are at the end of their service life. Even with the repairs that are planned for 2024, regular operations are at continued risk for unplanned repairs and shutdowns.

Proposed Long Term Plans – 2026 and beyond

If Council proceeds with detailed design following the proposed Options Analysis, at the conclusion of the design work, a recommendation will be presented to Council to approve the direction for the facility. If direction to proceed is provided, a closure of the facility would be planned for as early as 2026 to allow for the planned construction.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

The OCP sets out the following policies:

- LU 16 Prioritize infrastructure investment using a multiple bottom line decision-making approach based generally on the following parameters and priorities:
 - a. High-growth areas;
 - b. Public health and safety;

- c. Environmental responsibility;
 - d. Regulatory need;
 - e. Asset management principles;
 - f. Economic efficiencies and impact, such as partnerships, project coordination, and economic spinoffs
- PR3: Ensure appropriate and sufficient parklands, play spaces, and recreation infrastructure are provided as a form of essential social and ecological infrastructure to meet the needs of the community and accommodate growth.
 - PR 13: Maintain and invest in Lewis Recreation, Lewis and Sims Parks as centralized, high –intensity regional recreation destinations intended to serve the indoor and outdoor recreation needs of the community
 - PR14: Continue to review plans for expansion or renovation of existing recreational facilities in accordance with the Parks and Recreation master plan and particularly within the Town and Neighbourhood Centres and Corridors.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan Recommendation 4.1.3: Plan for the short-term operation and long-term replacement of the outdoor pool with a communications and engagement process.

- Provide information to the community regarding the age and condition of the outdoor pool, the challenges of the location, and the maintenance and capital improvement costs.
- Undertake a feasibility study for replacing the outdoor pool activities
- Consult with the community regarding the options identified in the feasibility study

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Costs for the above mentioned works are estimated as per below:

Phasing	Item	Year	Estimated Cost	Note
Immediate Action	Required Repairs	2024	\$75,000	
Immediate Action	Options Analysis	2024	\$125,000	
Short Term	Detailed Design	2025	\$250,000	Dependent on Option Chosen
Long Term	Construction	2026 or later	\$1M - \$18M	Dependent on Option Chosen

In the interest of time and financial transparency, staff have submitted a preliminary financial request to the Comox Valley Regional District Recreation Grant Service for the costs associated with immediate operational repairs (\$75,000) and the Options Analysis (\$125,000), in addition to our annual capital maintenance grant request. This request will be modified as required based on Council's decision. If funding is not supported through the CVRD Recreation Grant Service staff will return to Council with alternative funding recommendations.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

Planning for the future of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool is a strategic priority and incorporated into the work plans of Engineering Services and Recreation, Culture, and Community Services. Engineering Services will lead the Options Analysis and necessary repairs, and will work with Public Works Services to complete the annual maintenance in advance of the 2024 operating season. Consultants with technical knowledge specific to this work will be utilized as required.

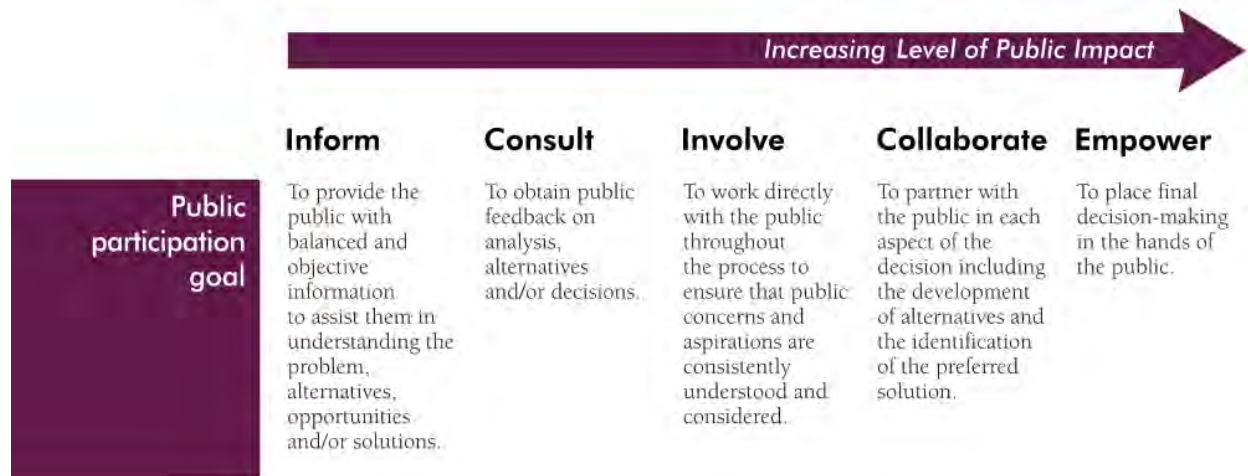
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following strategic priority:

- Parks and Recreation - Complete recreation facilities need assessments and capital improvements: Florence Filberg Centre, Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool, Lewis Centre

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Based on the IAP2 spectrum, the City would inform the public of the proposed works in 2024 as needed.



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OPTIONS: To be read as separate resolutions

1. THAT based on the January 24, 2024 report “Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool - Condition Assessments and Options Analysis”, Council direct staff to proceed with procurement to start immediate repairs for the Courtenay Memorial Pool; and
 2. THAT Council direct staff to proceed with procurement for an Options Analysis for the future of the pool at its current location.
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

Prepared by: Adam Pitcher, ASCT, PMP, Manager of Engineering, Capital Projects

Reviewed by: Chris Davidson P. Eng, PMP, Director of Engineering Services

Susie Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

Adam Langenmaier, Director of Financial Services

Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)

ATTACHMENTS:

1. PRESENTATION - Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool - Condition Assessments and Options Analysis

Click or tap here to enter text.



City of
Courtenay

Courtenay Outdoor Pool

Presented by:
Chris Davidson



Overview

Future of the Outdoor Pool



Background

History

- Outdoor pool is one of oldest pools of its kind in B.C., opened July 1, 1949
- The original 25m pool is made of cast-in-place walls and slab.
- Wading pool was added in 1959
- Change rooms and multipurpose area added in 1979
- Operation of the pool moved from Courtenay Recreational Association to City of Courtenay in 1996



Background

Strategic Direction

- **Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2019)** recommendations:
 - Explore opportunities for replacing the services of the outdoor pool either through replacement or relocation
 - Complete a feasibility study involving community and stakeholder consultation to determine options.

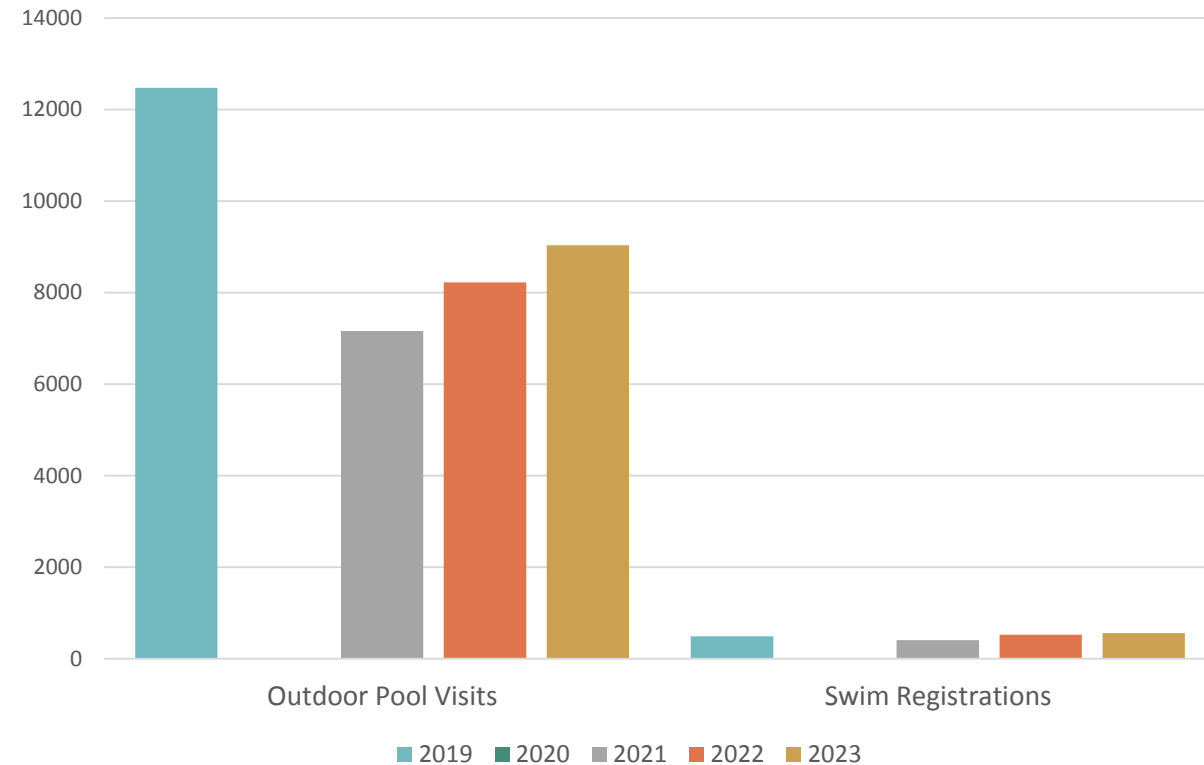


Outdoor Pool Operations

Outdoor Pool Usage

- Steadily recovering from COVID-19, with approximately 10,000 visits per season, plus additional ~600 program registrations
- 64 rentals in 2023 for a total of 81.5 hours; including 30 school bookings
- Blue Devils Swim Club (since 1948) with over 200 hours per season, including one swim meet

Outdoor Pool Visits & Registrations 2019-2023



Aquatic Needs Strategy

Strategic Objectives

- 1) High quality aquatic facilities that are adaptable and responsive to community need.
- 2) Provide accessible, affordable and inclusive facilities and services.
- 3) Facilities and services are well planned, maintained and managed.

Aquatic Strategy Recommended Facility Option:

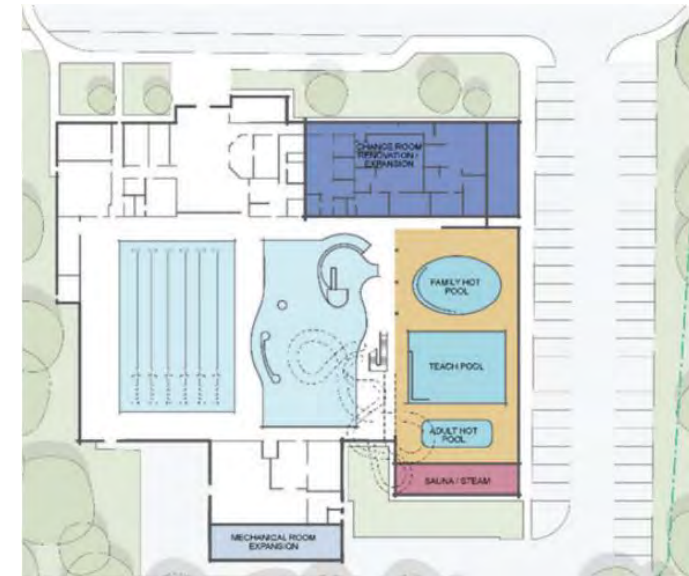
- Consolidation of indoor and outdoor aquatics at Aquatic Centre



Aquatic Needs Strategy

CVRD Recreation Commission Strategic Plan:

- Incorporate Sport Centre aquatic amenities and programming into the Aquatic Centre:
 - Distinct focus on wellness
 - Addition of 25 metre pool (extension or new pool)
 - Closure of aquatic facilities at Sport Centre
- Medium Term (5 to 7 years; 2027 to 2029)
 - Allows time for Courtenay to make decisions around outdoor pool



Courtenay Outdoor Pool Engagement

Future of Outdoor Pool Preferred Options

Option 1: Keep the Outdoor Pool at its current location and maintain the current service level while addressing identified issues with the facility.

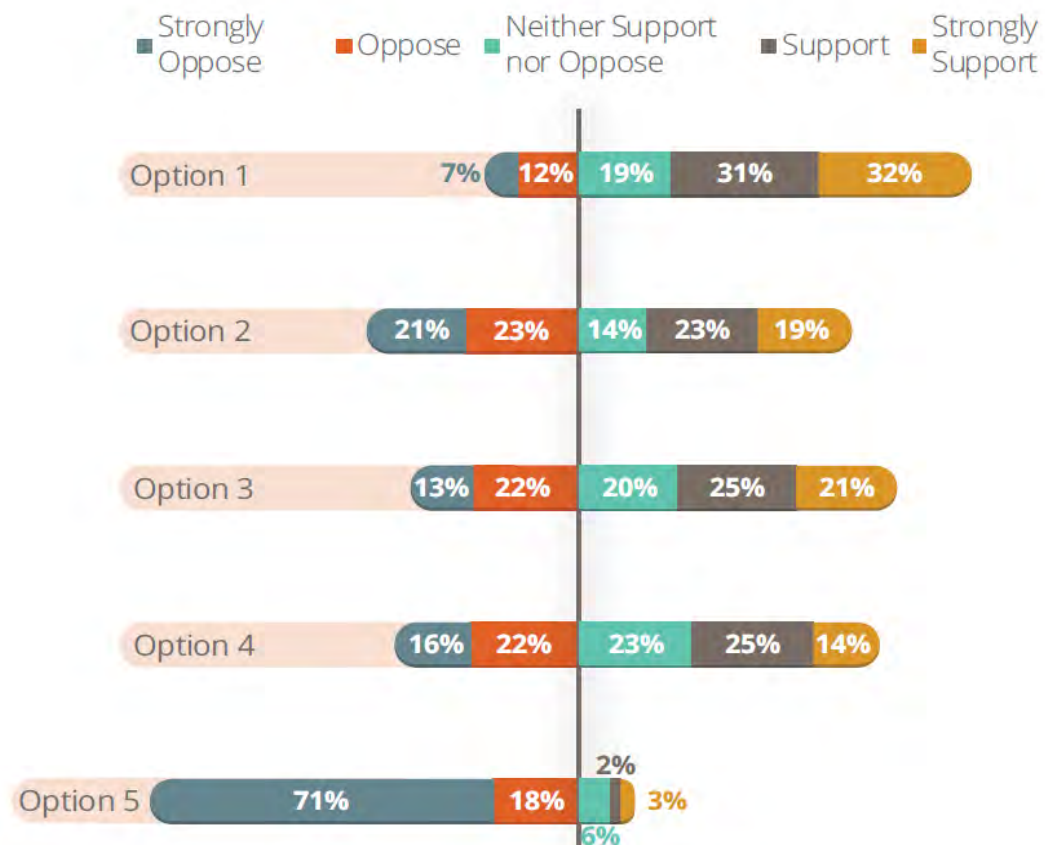
Option 3: Keep the Outdoor Pool at its current location but undertake a significant renovation to increase the service level and improve accessibility.

Option 5: Close the Outdoor Pool and do not invest in a replacement public outdoor pool.

Option 2: Close the Outdoor Pool and develop a new outdoor pool co-located at the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre site.

Option 4: Close the Outdoor Pool and develop a new outdoor pool at another location in Courtenay.

Graph 7: Support for Options for the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool



Condition Assessments

- Following operational review, leak detection and condition assessments have been ongoing for the Memorial Outdoor Pool.
- Leak detection of both the lap pool, and the wading pool.
- Condition assessments of the pool and its systems (mechanical, structural, electrical, and coating)



Leak Detection

- Leak detection has been conducted throughout 2023, confirming the pool is leaking significant volume every day - 18 refills per season.
 - Leak detection has identified the recirculation piping, expansion joints, and cracks in the basin as major sources.
 - Remediation costs for this are estimated to be up to \$1M (tentatively planned for 2026), which may include some mechanical works as well.
- Wading pool sump is draining directly into ground/river and this will be addressed through remediation options.
- Environmental regulators were informed of the leaks in early 2023, with a promise to report back on remediation plans within the next 1-2 years.

Condition Assessments

- Condition assessments have been conducted on Structural, Electrical, Mechanical, and Pool Coating.
- Repairs to main drain valve and other components were undertaken before the 2023 season.
- All disciplines report that all systems are at or near the end of their service life.
- Still reviewing mechanical and safety findings, to determine potential impacts to operations.
- Some work may be needed to facilitate 2024 operation.

Immediate Actions - 2024

Address repairs required for regular operations

Routine & Planned Maintenance \$150,000*

- Routine repairs required for operation (i.e. cracks, VIHA requirements, etc.)
- Sand filter medium replacement (not an annual requirement)

Required Repairs as a result of Condition Assessments – up to \$75,000*

- Continue investigations to update pool operations documentation
- Complete needed mechanical and safety work (scope to be confirmed)
- Note: there will still be continued risks of emergent/unplanned repairs and shutdowns

Recommendation – Outdoor Pool Options Analysis - Estimated cost \$125,000*

- Conduct options analysis for future of the memorial pool at current location
- This will identify costs and lifecycles for new vs. renewal of existing.

** \$350,000 requested from CVRD Recreation Grant Service*

Short Term Plans - 2025

Detailed Design for Future of Pool

Recommendation: Detailed Construction Design - Estimated cost \$250K

- Initiate Detailed Design of selected facility option (based on options Analysis)
- Advance findings from Options Analysis and Condition Assessments
- Report back to environmental regulators on plans for leak remediation.

Complete any further needed works to support on-going operation.

- Regular Operations with continued risks of emergent/unplanned repairs and shutdowns.

Long Term Plans – 2026 and beyond

Temporary Closure for Repair, Renovation, or Redevelopment

Recommendation: Temporary Closure to complete repairs, renovation, or redevelopment as determined by Options Analysis

- Estimated budgets range from:
 - \$1M for repairs (condition assessment recommendations and leaks)
 - \$18M for completely new pool at current location



Questions?

